DEC 30 1948

The New Statesman and Nation, December 4, 1948

THE NEW

CHRISTMAS BOOKS

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXXVI. No. 926. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1948 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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ARMS AND THE MEN

FOR very different reasons Mr. Alexander and Mr. Gallacher are both anxious to suggest that the decision to restore the eighteen-month period of conscript service has something to do with the danger of war. But as a matter of fact, even if Mr. Marshall and Mr. Molotov had sworn blood brotherhood between American capitalism and Russian Communism, the House of Commons last Wednesday would have had to pass the amending Bill. Without it, Britain would have been unable next year to provide the minimum forces for maintaining our present commitments abroad. Even if Mr. Alexander tries to argue that the rising in Malaya was due to Russian hostility, the reply is obvious. Until all the Empire is a Commonwealth the Chiefs of Staff must be prepared to deal with sudden emergencies in the Colonial Empire, and the fact that this particular disturbance was caused by Communists is irrelevant to the problem of imperial defence. It is this fact that was disregarded by the Liberals and by those Labour M.P.s who voted against the Bill on Wednesday.

How is it that, despite the fact that we now have larger forces than in any other period of peace, we have fewer effective units for overseas service? What has upset the calculation which Field Marshal Montgomery made in April, 1947, that he could make do with a twelve-month period, although he was well aware that this would virtually exclude the use of conscripts overseas, apart from Germany? A major part of the answer is to be found in the figures of voluntary recruitment for the Army and for the Air Force. Recruitment of professional soldiers and airmen was discontinued during the war, with the result, in marked contrast with the Navy, that rapid demobilisation destroyed the cadres of trained men. Moreover, the loss of the Indian Army removed our most valuable reserve for imperial emergencies. In 1945, for instance, we were able to move an Indian brigade to Basra with decisive effects on the situation in Persia. Not so, to-day.

When Mr. Alexander, therefore, agreed to limit national service to twelve months, he must have known that his change of policy could only be sustained by two things. In the first place, he would have to obtain a rate of recruitment to the professional Army and Air Force which would enable the Chiefs of Staff to treat the conscript, not as part of our peacetime effective strength, but simply as a reserve in the home stations. In the second place, he would have to persuade Mr. Bevin to permit a substantial reduction in the establishment of our overseas garrisons, particularly in the Middle East.

It is not any tension with Russia which compels us to maintain large forces in the Suez area, but the simple fact that every single independent State in the Middle East is now hostile to us. Mr. Bevin's Palestine policy is still the most expensive single item on our defence bill. It is the main reason why Mr. Alexander had to find for next year more effective units than he had expected, just at the time when it was becoming only too clear that the recruiting campaign would fall short by at least 70,000 men of the minimum requirements for the Army.

Manifestly, the increases of pay announced last week should have been introduced eighteen months ago, when the term of conscript service was reduced; and a substantial Class A Reserve should then have been established, as has so often been recommended in these columns. Had both these steps been taken, with the proviso that the pay increases should have been higher than the scales just published, the new and, in view of our economic situation, regrettable change in the term of conscript service might have been avoided; for its only object is to enable conscripts to be used for six months overseas, and so to make up the deficiency of long-term service men. Even from the military point of view this use of conscripts is inefficient.

The present solution, therefore, is merely another stop-gap forced on the Government by its previous indecisions and delays. It can only be justified if steps are at once taken to obtain the requisite number of professional soldiers for overseas service, to make substantial economies by the co-ordination of the three Services which Mr. Alexander was appointed to carry out and has not yet begun, and finally to evolve a sane Middle Eastern policy which will reduce our crushing commitments in that area.

Splitting Berlin

The Russian decision to anticipate next Sunday's voting by "electing" an all-Communist administration carries one stage further the division of Berlin into an Eastern and a Western city. On another page a correspondent, writing before thi latest Russian move, describes the issues involved in the "plebiscite." Both sides, despite all the efforts of Dr. Bramuglia and Dr. Evatt in Paris, obviously believe that they will profit by winning time. The Russians presumably are still confident that they can wear down the Western Powers and ultimately turn the Berlin population against them, while Mr. Marshall and Mr. Bevin believe that the air-lift can beat the fog. Indeed, many of their military advisers are afraid of any agreement which would permit a re-opening of land traffic. They argue that this would involve the break-up of an organisation which has already earned dividends by solving important technical problems of air transport. "Why put yourselves once again at the mercy of the Russians," they ask, "when we have shown you how to keep your feet off Russian ground and to perfect techniques which the Red Air Force does not possess?" Unfortunately, this complacent technicians' view offers no solution for the internal political situation in Berlin. The partition of Germany may be a deplorable necessity; but how long can a city survive partitioned between hostile Powers?

Britain's Four-year Plan

There appears to be little doubt as to the authenticity of the details which have been published by the Paris press of the "secret" Four-year Plan presented by Britain to the O.E.E.C.; and there is equally little occasion for surprise that its nature should temporarily have created a deadlock in the formulation of the integrated "Marshall Area" plan to be presented to Congress. The Continental recipients of Marshall

Aid, in drawing up their several national four-year plans, had assumed that, by 1952, there would be a reversion to the pre-war situation in which Western Europe sold a great deal more to Britain than it bought—the balance being covered by British earnings in other parts of the world. Consternation has therefore been caused by the disclosure that, under the plan drawn up by Sir Stafford Cripps, Britain expects in four years' time to have a trading surplus of 49 million dollars with the Marshall countries of Western Europe, and to use this surplus, plus a credit of 816 million dollars with the members of the sterling bloc, to offset a continuing adverse balance with the dollar area. The shock which these figures have occasioned in Paris is understandable; but it is idle for Britain's Continental neighbours to expect her, in any foreseeable circumstances, to be able to resume her old role of creditor country. Indeed, the positive overall balance of payments which Sir Stafford hopes to achieve by 1952 rests on the assumption, which seems highly optimistic, that Britain's credit balance on invisible account will rise in four years from £32 millions to £263 millions. Rather than complaining of British reluctance to finance their recovery, Continental countries will do well to study afresh the main conclusion which was reached by the Economic Commission for Europe, that—Marshall Aid or no Marshall Aid—European recovery must ultimately be based on a planned expansion of East-West trade.

End of the Nanking Government

With Hsuchow cut off and the Communist troops threatening to cross the Yangtse, Shanghai is clearly indefensible, and the Chiang Kai-shek Government is preparing to leave Nanking. Possibly the Americans may think it worth while to attempt to maintain a Kuomintang base in Southern China with Canton as capital; but ports are not of much value if the hinterland is in the hands of a hostile force, and Mr. Marshall is under no illusions about the corruption and futility of the Kuomintang rump. Practical business men, particularly British, are likely to make the best commercial terms they can for continued trading with the Communists. Negotiations between Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists would now seem out of the question—the picture might be different if Chiang Kai-shek himself disappeared from the scene. His only important card has for some time been the continued resistance of General Fu, the one "reliable" Kuomintang commander. But Fu himself is now in a hopeless position; he may be compelled to surrender or he may follow the traditional course of Chinese wisdom and make terms with his overwhelming opponent.

Uno Conflict on the Levant

In its last hectic fortnight, the Assembly will have to make up its mind on two closely related problems, the future of Palestine and of the Italian Colonies. Both are being discussed formally in terms of the welfare of the people concerned, but the Great Powers hardly trouble to disguise the strategic motives which dominate their policy. In the Palestine debate, Dominion pressure has compelled the British Government to retreat step by step from its extreme anti-Jewish position. It now seems probable that the Australian proposal, for direct negotiation between the belligerents and the admission of Israel to the United Nations, will get the necessary seven votes in the Security Council. In such negotiations the Jews would probably retain the Northern Negev; but Britain may manage to keep Aquaba, the Palestinian port on the Red Sea, for Trans-Jordan. Frustrated north of Suez, Mr. Bevin is determined to replace Palestine with a strong North African base. Hence his demand for a trusteeship over an enlarged Cyrenaica. This is not disputed by America or France; but the Russians, for political reasons, are urging the return to Italy of all her former colonies except Eritrea. The bone of contention will be Tripoli. Britain has designs on it, but the French, whose Arab policy differs from ours, do not want to see a British trusteeship; and they are supporting the Russian proposal that it should go back to Italy. The large Italian and Jewish populations, fearful of the results of a pro-Arab British policy in Tripoli, also favour this solution. The American attitude is uncertain. Mr. Marshall would like British trusteeship in order to protect the huge airfield, now used by American Superforts in Germany for their Mediterranean training flights. But he has also to consider the feelings not only of Italy, but of the vocal Italian minority in the U.S.A.

The Republic of Ireland

The Government of Eire has at last taken a step which seems emotionally satisfying to its citizens and acceptable to both the British and the Dominion Governments. The King's writ no longer ran in Eire; the country had enjoyed the benefits of its anomalous position for a dozen years. Neither in nor quite out of the Commonwealth, Eire had gone its own way in peace and war; and the formal repeal of the External Relations Act has raised little more than an interesting problem in constitutional law. The representatives of Ulster may protest against the claim of their neighbour to be the Republic of Ireland—and the step itself may add a little to the existing problems of partition—but neither Stormont nor Mr. Churchill has offered more than a *pro forma* objection. It is proper and sensible to maintain the closest trade and political ties with the new Republic. The history of Ireland entitles its people to satisfy their taste for oddity in relation to Britain, and there is no cause for commercial or other penalties. On the contrary, we look forward to greater reciprocity and mutual help. Mr. Attlee may have piqued Mr. Churchill by his bland assurance that an Irishman may continue to enjoy equal status with a true-born Briton and yet be a citizen of a Republic. But why object to an Irish answer to an Irish situation?

Government Publicity

The theme that dominates the first annual report of the Central Office of Information is anxiety to prove that the Office is never a prime mover in the dissemination of publicity. The responsibility for publicity, it is emphasised, rests always with the Department into whose field the particular subject falls. And that, many of its critics maintain, is exactly what is wrong with the C.O.I. It has got certain initiatory powers, but it is at pains not to use them. Its role is envisaged as that of an expert agency designed to execute the plans of others but never to co-ordinate, modify or expand them. Often it acts as a middle-man, passing on to commercial advertising agencies the campaign required by a Department. It is not difficult to see from this Report why the Government's public relations frequently seem to lack cohesion. The very agency which ought to supply that quality is pushed into the background by Departmental information officers who insist on their own independence. Consequently, when the Government wakes up to the need to put across to the country the nature of our economic position, what does it do? Turn to the C.O.I.? No, it creates an Economic Information Unit to do the job. Yet, despite its limitations, the C.O.I. has done good work; and, if it were more confidently used by the Government, it could make a far greater impact on the public than it does without incurring the charge of partisanship.

U.S. Labour and the Left

The new T.U.C. attack upon Communists as disrupters unfit to hold union office coincided with similar, though more drastic, decisions in the U.S.A. by both the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. Hitherto the C.I.O. had not given official endorsement to its affiliates who have been raiding unions still controlled by the Left, though President Philip Murray had provided money and organisers for the drive, particularly by the steel and "auto" unions, to break up and take over organisations led by Communists. Now, fresh from the successes of the election, where the C.I.O. materially assisted in minimising the Wallace vote and electing many Democratic candidates, Murray and his colleagues have declared open warfare on the smaller Left-wing unions. While the United Electrical Workers are still strong enough to stand up to both raids and other pressures, weaker brethren, such as the Food and Tobacco Workers and Farm Equipment, are now excluded from even nominal protection by the C.I.O. on the grounds that they have failed to organise the fields allotted to them. As a result, the Left may be forced to choose between steady attrition within the C.I.O. or a desperate attempt to survive by withdrawing and perhaps finding temporary shelter in another anomalous alliance with John L. Lewis. Either way, its position is critical; and, even if the Taft-Hartley law is repealed, the non-Communist affidavits which have helped so much to isolate the Left may be retained in a new labour law. The A.F. of L., having ploughed a lonely furrow for the last three years, now finds that both the C.I.O. and the British T.U.C. are on the point of quitting the World Federation. It has, therefore, redoubled its efforts to establish a new international organisation of "free" unions. In short, anti-Communism has at last provided the basis for a working unity between the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O.

Welsh Nationalism

It is doubtful whether the Government's latest suggestion for "appeasing" the local patriotism of Wales will satisfy those Welshmen who want to see some degree of devolution in dealing with Welsh affairs, still less the Welsh Nationalists. The Council which it is proposed to set up is apparently to meet only in private, is to consist solely of Government nominees, and is to have no specific functions beyond the opportunity of occasionally meeting and questioning Ministers about "the impact of Government activity" on the life of the Principality. No doubt the Council can pass resolutions behind closed doors and address them in due form to the Whitehall Department concerned; but it will have little or no assurance that they will ever emerge from the pigeon hole into which they fall. This, surely, is trifling with the very real feeling among Welshmen that Wales should have a larger say in the democratic management of some, at least, of her own concerns.

The Death Penalty

Last time we had an official inquiry into the death penalty question (the Select Committee of 1930) far too much weight was given to witnesses' spoken opinions; in the absence of adequate research, particularly in the countries which have abolished it, this was perhaps inevitable. The Home Secretary's announcement of a new Royal Commission comes at the moment when the National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, which has amassed a good deal of evidence that the 1930 Committee never heard, has merged its identity in the Howard League for Penal Reform. This union of forces was formally ratified at the League's annual meeting last Monday night. It will be a powerful combination and it is the right moment for it. As Miss Margery Fry remarked at the meeting, "it is always a good thing in itself to make one society grow where two grew before." Mr. Frank Dawtry, who has worked tirelessly for so many years as secretary of the Abolition Society, is a member of the Howard League's Executive Committee, where his experience will be reinforced by bigger propagandist resources and a wider public. The two societies have long had a common aim. That the abolition of the death penalty is in practice a pre-requisite of many other penal reforms, is emphasised by Mr. Chuter Ede's suggestion that we cannot stop hanging our criminals until the prisons are more suitable for long detentions.

IN PARLIAMENT—Painting the Lilies.

THE Tory morticians have been busy putting the cosmetics on the corpses of their policy. The results have been life-like. Take the Industrial Charter, prepared under Butler's direction. When he solemnly unveiled it, cloth-cap on its head, spats on its feet, you had to look twice before you realised that it couldn't leave the slab.

Encouraged by the success of the leading professor, the assistants have been trying their own hand. Colonel Lancaster, a former coal-owner, recently produced a plan, which the Tory Central Office cautiously described as "an important individual contribution," for preserving the Coal Board. But the coal industry, now happily convalescent, is in no mood to receive an injection of embalmer's fluid; and in Monday's debate on the Coal Bill, designed to give the industry greater freedom, both the Government and the back-bench Labour speakers, while thanking the Tories for their strenuous sympathy, had to assure them that the industry was really getting along very nicely, although it was still not in perfect health.

Brendan Bracken opened in his agreeably rumbustious manner, and for a short time it seemed that the debate might take the familiar form of mutual political sand-bagging. Luckily, both Tories and Socialists recognised that the most acute problem of the Coal Board is to encourage managers as well as men, so that the debate settled down into serious inquiry. Nationalisation has ended the vendetta of coal-owners and miners, and thus removed most of the bitterness in the miner-manager relationship. It hasn't yet determined the status and opportunities for managers in the new organisation. Bracken, Jennie Lee and Charlie Grey, an ex-miner, all asked that the Coal Board should give special attention to the manager and technician—Bracken in the name of enterprise, Jennie Lee in the name of efficiency (she called Marshal Stalin to witness) and Grey in the name of the miners—a historic departure from the time of "Us" and "Them."

From coal, the House turned to the Committee Stage of the Civil Defence Bill. The Committee Stage, with its clause-by-clause examination, invites a less formal style of speech than a Second or Third Reading. To worry a phrase till it is in shreds, and then give it an extra ten minutes' shaking, is a special art which a handful of Members possess in an unusual degree. Williams of Torquay, for the Tories, fixes an unrelenting eye on the Minister, and returns to the Clause, if he thinks it requires improvement or more light, indifferent to the groans of the Government and the melancholy of his colleagues. Scollan, for the Socialists, is not second to Williams in his indomitable persistence in the face of rebuffs.

Last Tuesday, each made dogged and valuable contributions to the Bill. Colonel Elliot had complained that a friend in the Lobby had informed him that he was "going out to take steps for the purpose of effecting, or for facilitating the subsequent effecting, of having a cup of tea." Apart from the "cup of tea," the words were not unlike the language of part of Clause I. The Home Secretary defended the phrase ". . . effecting, or for facilitating the effecting of . . . ," instead of "for the purposes of . . . ," as making for greater clarity. Williams insisted that the simple dative is better than the elaborate gerundive. The Home Secretary, a reasonable man, agreed to make the language clearer.

Later in the discussion, Scollan brought Sir John Anderson to his feet by a reference to the Brown Paper Atomic Bomb Preventive. "Don't misrepresent me," said Anderson. "I said flash burn was one danger that could be guarded against by that simple means." With a layman's common-sense, Scollan replied that it depended on how near or how far one was from the atomic bomb.

Scollan formed what one Member called a Confederacy with Emrys Hughes, who thought that the best defence against atomic bombs was not to make them. He pitied the animals which were to be used for atomic experiments, and made it clear that in the issue between the Rt. Hon. Gentlemen of the Front Benches and the monkeys, he was definitely on the side of the monkeys. MAURICE EDELMAN

A GERMAN-AMERICAN EUROPE?

THE aged Prince of Thurn and Taxis, stiffly coated, with the stars of vanished royalty winking from his bosom, may be seen on almost any night this winter stalking through the dense if doddering ranks of aged courtiers—taken in as "refugees" at the behest of Democracy—to his courtroom in the ghostly palace of his ancestors. Three hundred years after the Treaty of Westphalia splintered imperial Germany into as many sovereign principalities, the American Republic has again restored legitimacy to its ancient seat and privilege. Sooner or later, no doubt, the Prince of Thurn and Taxis, in his dignity of federated sovereign, will emerge at some great conference on Federal Europe. Men will gasp that Metternich has walked again, and even Mr. Churchill will give him precedence.

This is the comic opera aspect of affairs in the Western Zones of Germany. The other side—the business side that is neither old-worldly nor idiotic—is perhaps best illustrated by the latest American moves in connection with the industrial capacity and output of the Ruhr and of other vital regions of German heavy industry. Within a few weeks the advisory committee appointed by Mr. Hoffman, the E.C.A. Administrator, to investigate dismantling in Germany will make its report. Composed of a group of leading American industrialists, of whom some have financial interests in Germany, this committee is confidently expected by its promoters to recommend the cessation of all dismantling and the immediate removal of all economic restrictions in Western Germany such as the Anglo-American "level of industry" agreement. Its attitude can best be measured by the recent decision of Military Government—which shares its views—to restore management of basic industry to the Germans. Germany has become the key and favoured region of the Marshall planners, and the saving of German capitalism an object of their close solicitude. The Western Zones this year will receive more dollar aid than Britain, and only a little less than France.

There can be no valid objection to full-scale German recovery once the Allies can be sure that this recovery will not again become exploited by reactionary pressures into another outbreak of militant nationalism. Obviously, the condition is vitally important. But it is precisely this condition that Mr. Hoffman and his "Germany Firsters" in America seem determined to ignore. In Western Germany to-day, as things stand, the essentials of the old regime which provoked two world wars have survived a second defeat without permanent or even serious disability. A spirit of paternal feudalism broods over the countryside where the influence of the Prince of Thurn and Taxis and his compeers remains sovereign and unrestricted throughout rural life. The massive war industries of the Ruhr and Rhineland have outlived a new threat of dismantlement and expropriation of the old owners just as they outlived the same threat after 1918. Not much more than a few score million pounds in reparations have been taken from the Western Zones—probably less than a fiftieth part of what was taken in the 'twenties. The system of administration and the pattern of ownership are practically undisturbed. The men in control—most of the Nazi chieftains apart—are the same; and this means that the moral and political atmosphere is much the same. It might matter less that Nazis should run Western Germany—20 per cent. of the mayors of the United States Zone, for instance, are former Nazi party members—if only the order of society had decisively changed. But the order of society, many superficial changes notwithstanding, is basically the same as before; and, this being so, placing the nominal decision for or against nationalisation of basic industries in the hands of "the German people" gives little assurance that the old owners will be displaced.

To this reincarnation of a social order, twice overturned by the united efforts of its victims abroad, the Americans have now brought the powerful stimulus of financial aid. Not only have the subventions of the War Department and the Marshall Plan proved exceedingly generous: what now impends is the pouring of private dollar investment into Western Germany. Already General Clay has raised the ban on foreign investment to the extent of allowing foreign holders of Deutschemarks to use these for capital investment. Not slow to understand what has taken place—or taken place again, for many leading Germans in Frankfurt and Bonn to-day were men of middle-age in the 'twenties—the industrialists have responded by expanding production. Just as after 1918 they held output down until they were reasonably sure of having escaped expropriation, socialisation, and (for the most part) reparation, so after 1945 they waited until currency reform had completed the partition of Germany—and thus saved them from these dangers once again—before allowing their industries to "recover." Nothing else can adequately explain how the level of industrial production could rise from less than 40 per cent. of the 1936 level in May of this year to more than 80 per cent. in November.

The French believe that the Germans can now expect to dominate the economic life of Western Europe easily within a few years. The West German standard of living is already little inferior to that of France; soon France must drop decisively behind. The French may be right; but the picture in that form is too simple. What is more to be feared is the development of some form of German-American financial condominium over the Western Continent. That is the direction, at least, in which Mr. Hoffman is now moving. United States investment is no longer likely to take the anonymous form of the 'twenties, when dollars flowed into Germany through official loans of one kind or another, but the much more effective form of direct ownership. Dollars in the near future may be expected to come streaming across the Atlantic directly into the ownership of specific plants, industries and banks. There is plenty of reason to believe that the American trusts have made extensive preparations to this end, and that German monopolists are by no means averse to partitioning the economic mastery of Western Europe with United States investors.

Even if we suppose that American capitalists will, after all, abstain from the attractive prospect of investing in German industry, enough has occurred to show that their interest in German recovery is threatening to upset the whole conception of Marshall Aid. What we are now faced with is not the construction of a new and lively organisation of international democracy in Western Europe—dynamic, self-confident, conscious of its mission—but a new kind of investment corporation in which the holding company is American and the managing director German, while the labour employed is expected to be strictly "non-political," and the customers, French and British and Dutch and the rest, must take what they are given. This is not what we understood by the Marshall Plan; and we can be reasonably sure that it is not what was understood by the electors of President Truman.

This gross distortion of American aid has begun to worry thoughtful Americans. One of the reasons why Mr. Hoffman's advisory committee of tycoons is in such a hurry to make its report on German industry is that the new Congress, which meets in January, may not like the aims and methods of the men appointed by the last Congress, when the Republicans ruled the roost. President Truman is now reported to have given his attention to protests reaching him against the increasing "Germanisation" of Marshall Aid. Hence Mr. Hoffman's rush to present the new Congress with a *fait accompli*.

These second thoughts, hesitant though they may be, are welcome and overdue. We have

reached a fork in the road. One way leads toward new and peaceful forms of society: the other toward a repetition of all the mistakes and cowardly failings of the 'twenties. If Western Union based on American aid is to deserve the continued support of progressively minded people in Europe, and, above all, of Socialists, then the Hoffman-Big Business conception of German recovery will have to be displaced by policies which will go all out for democratic changes in Western Germany. Any other conception slams the door on progress and peace in Europe.

This is therefore a moment of great and perhaps decisive importance for the post-war development of Western Europe. Perhaps at no time since it took office has the British Government possessed a more promising chance—or become placed under a greater need—of pushing American policies in a progressive direction. The President and the new Congress are likely to be aware soon, if they are not so already, of the extreme undesirability of what is being promoted in Western Germany. They are looking, or may soon be looking, for an acceptable alternative. They are in the mood to listen to advice from tried friends. Only the Labour Government among such friends abroad has the inspiration and authority to suggest what this alternative might be. The conservative Government of France cannot do it, no matter how much the French may fear a nationalist Germany. It is up to the Labour Government. After all, Mr. Ernest Bevin said, only 18 months ago, that "the British Government could not allow the development of the German economy, coupled with this question of reparations, in such a way that loans from outside were involved as after the last war." Then the result of it, Mr. Bevin added, "was the creation of a war potential for the second world war." Must it happen again? It will, unless British Labour supports more effectively the trade unionists and other democratic elements in Western Germany who, with adequate encouragement, might still stem the tide of reaction.

RUNNING THE COAL MINES

THE National Coal Board is now under heavy fire from almost every quarter. The Tories, reinforced in this matter by Sir Charles Reid, are attacking it on the ground that it is over-centralised and ought to cede most of its power to smaller units organised as far as possible on ordinary business lines. Some of the miners (but not the National Union of Miners as a whole) are demanding direct Trade Union representation on the Board itself; and a good many more are saying that the workers' share in its counsels is altogether too small and that the Government has leant over backwards in appointing opponents of public ownership to key posts in the nationalised industries. Mine managers, and not a few others, are complaining of an over-inflated administrative personnel, both at the centre and in the Divisions, and of the lack of any clear principle of organisation, especially in defining the respective spheres of policy-making and executive authority. Finally, a considerable section of intelligent public opinion has an uneasy sense that things are not going right, and in particular that the promised fruits of nationalisation—a changed attitude of the ordinary working miner towards his job—are not being gathered in.

No small part of their criticisms can be discounted as part of the unavoidable pains of transition. It would have been too much to expect the coal industry, with its black record of human relations, to settle down suddenly to smooth and satisfactory working under any regime, however well conceived. It would, however, be foolish to brush aside the whole of the criticisms as either frivolous or factious; and it would be particularly foolish for Socialists to ignore them because they are being used by anti-Socialists as a stick to beat Socialism, and especially as a means of prejudicing the public against further extensions of public ownership. The right course is to face the position with a readiness to admit that substantial changes may be desirable in the methods of running the coal mines as a public service, and that mistakes may have been made in designing the new structure for the first big industry to be transferred from private to public operation.

The most cogent points of the criticism of the present set-up are those which allege, on the one hand, over-centralisation and, on the other, a failure to enlist the full co-operation of the working miners. On the first point, Sir Charles Reid heads the critics, with his proposal to break up the executive responsibility by establishing no fewer than 26 independent Corporations, each with its own separate board of management under a managing director with full executive power. Sir Charles has since explained that he does not propose to make these Corporations *financially* independent; he recognises that some of them would be bound for the present to incur losses, which the N.C.B. would have to meet. He does, however, seem to imply that, subject to this, each Corporation should be, as far as possible, an independent business unit, with the N.C.B. acting only as a supervising body rather in the manner of a holding company. His object clearly is to increase to the utmost the power of the technicians in managing and reshaping the industry in the several localities, and to reduce to a minimum interference either by N.C.B. administrators or by the Miners' Union.

Such a solution is quite unacceptable. The mining engineer is a very important person in his own sphere of action; but to give him the powers Sir Charles Reid proposes would involve putting technical considerations first and human relations nowhere. It would mean, not merely a head-on clash with the N.U.M., but also a high probability of labour troubles all over the coalfields, a widespread refusal to work the machinery of joint consultation which the N.C.B. is trying to foster, and a continual tussle for power between the local Corporations and the National Board as the representative of over-all planning policy. It would fail entirely to meet the workers' demand for a new status in industry and for an effective and increasing place in its control; and it would remove the affairs of the coal industry still further from any real supervision by either Parliament or the Government. In effect, it would put back the old system of management, with only the ownership of the capital changed, and would establish dictatorship by technicians in place of mine-owners.

How, then, if over-centralisation is to be combatted, can the administration be reorganised into more manageable units? The proposal to abolish the eight Divisions and to give more power to the smaller areas into which they are at present sub-divided is closely akin to Sir Charles Reid's conception. The Divisions, on the assumption that the real policy-making power is to remain with the N.C.B., are means not of increasing, but of decreasing centralisation. The N.C.B. cannot deal directly, over the whole field of supervision, with upwards of 50 areas—or even with 26. Nor can the men yet be found who can be trusted with full independence in the administration and reorganisation of so many separate units. First-class men who combine administrative with technical ability are scarce; and the essential function of the Division is to bring this combination of qualities to bear upon the lower local units. At the same time, it can hardly be denied that there has been a tendency for both the Divisions and the central departments of the N.C.B. to become over-staffed, so as to duplicate functions to an undesirable extent. This is a not unnatural, but most undesirable, result of the superimposition of something akin to a civil service administration on the pre-existing executive machinery of the industry; and it needs correction by a drastic pruning of redundant administrative personnel wherever it can be shown that the central departments or the Divisions have been guilty of "empire-building." The Burrows Committee, unless its unpublished full report contains a good deal more than the published summary, does not appear to have faced squarely this important aspect of the problem.

In the course of the Debate on Monday, Mr. Gaitskell emphasised that it was always the intention that Areas, not Divisions, should be the "executive operational units." If so, there is a good deal to be said for the argument that the number both of the Divisions and of the Areas within them ought to be increased. The case for increasing the number of Divisions is that, as far as possible, they ought to coincide with the traditional coalfields, within which strong regional loyalties and customary traditions have grown up. For example, Northumberland and Durham might well be separate administrative units. The case for increasing the number of Areas is that each Area ought to be, as far as possible, a real unit of productive organisation rather than of co-ordination, if there is not to be a dangerous confusion between the functions of the Divisions and of the Areas. Given such a reorganisation, much better co-operation could be built up between the Divisions and the regional units of the N.U.M.; and, locally, there would be a much improved chance of building up effective consultative machinery, not only in the individual pits, but in each administrative area as well.

As for the N.C.B. staff, it is open to question whether it will be improved by the proposed addition of part-time members. If, as we believe, it must continue as a directly administrative body, responsible for the executive tasks of reorganisation and not merely for supervision and co-ordination of autonomous local units, its members ought to give their full attention to its affairs. The mixing of full-time and part-time members is an illogicality, which reflects a difference of view about the functions which the N.C.B. should fulfil, and makes more difficult than ever a right solution of the relations between the Board and the Ministry of Fuel and Power. Apart from this, it will do nothing to solve the problem, which must be tackled, of preventing the Civil Service outlook from clashing with the functional-industrial point of view in the organisation, and convincing the miners that their industry has a Socialist, not a capitalist-bureaucratic structure.

In saying this, we are not suggesting that the N.C.B. have done badly. On the contrary, we think it has done many things well, and has made within limits a success of its very difficult job. We infinitely prefer it as it is to Sir Charles Reid's 26 largely independent corporations, or to a Board made up of representatives of conflicting interests. This performance is, however, no good reason for not making it better if we can, both by changes in personnel and organisation and by making a still greater effort to satisfy the reasonable claim of the workers that change in ownership shall carry with it a real change in status at every level.

A LONDON DIARY

THE "working party" on political union, which has just begun its deliberations in Paris, is a very odd mixture. The French have sent a bevy of ex-Premiers, and Mr. Van Zeeland is there as one of the Belgian delegates. Dr. Dalton has Lord Inverchapel and Sir Edward Bridges to advise him as well as Mr. Gill of the Co-op. The agenda is confined to a study of the French proposal for a consultative assembly of the O.E.E.C. nations (of which the members should be selected by the Parliaments) and the British plan for a council of the Brussels powers, with Italy and possibly Germany added. I cannot think it will be easy to find a compromise. Mr. Bevin dislikes the idea of any representative European Assembly for two reasons. He thinks it would give the Communists—and the Gaullists—a gratuitous opportunity for airing their views; and, in the second place, he has a lurking suspicion that a majority of the Assembly might become enthusiastic supporters of Federal Union. Believing in functional collaboration between sovereign Governments, he wants to see a

miniature Security Council for Western Europe, minus the veto. In his general position he is strongly supported not only by his Foreign Office advisers but also by Mr. Churchill. Despite his activities at The Hague, Mr. Churchill is a staunch opponent of anything as revolutionary as Federal Union. But apparently he believes that under his own magical leadership a European Assembly could be rendered harmless and confined to registering good intentions in a way likely to impress Congress and increase the flow of dollars. Granted that both men are opposed to French proposed Federal Union, I fancy that Mr. Bevin is right about tactics. A European Assembly might disintegrate sensationally into a babel of conflicting voices and so damage the chances of a functional Western Union; or possibly it might be a sensational success, in which case Mr. Bevin would be under great pressure from the U.S.A. to bow to its advice and accept a measure of real political union. What is most unlikely is that a European Assembly could be managed like a Conservative Party Conference.

* * *

Ciano's Diplomatic Papers (Odhams, 17s. 6d.) contains one fascinating document of real historical importance. It is a very long despatch which Count Grandi, Italian Ambassador to London, sent to the Duce early in 1938, before the resignation of Mr. Eden. Grandi describes how he refused to see Eden alone, inventing a diplomatic golf appointment as an insulting excuse for refusing. Chamberlain was desperately anxious to reach an agreement with Italy (this was the period of the Anschluss and just before Hitler's invasion of Austria), while Eden was determined that an agreement with Italy should involve a clear understanding about Italy's attitude to Germany and a withdrawal of Italian troops from Spain. Mr. Chamberlain maintained, as Grandi tells us, a contact with Grandi through a private and personal messenger. Grandi finally saw Chamberlain with Eden present. In a three-hour conversation, which must have been intolerably humiliating for Eden, Grandi deliberately stuffed Chamberlain with all the facts and arguments he wanted to defeat Eden in the next day's Cabinet. It is an astonishing picture—Chamberlain refusing to allow Eden to argue with Grandi and scoring off him all the time by accepting Grandi's statements as replies to Eden's objections. Grandi gives a detailed and apparently verbatim account of the whole three hours, gloating maliciously over his success in enlisting the British Prime Minister against the British Foreign Secretary. He remarks that this process was much facilitated by his previous conversation with Chamberlain's private messenger (it would be interesting to know who this was). Eden's resignation took place a few weeks later.

* * *

It would be a full-time job nowadays to follow all the cases—in Europe alone—of people being tried and punished for their political opinions. Often, of course, a crime is pinned on them; this is easy since, where "loyal opposition" is illegal, hostility to the regime must be underground and technically criminal. Some of the worst recent cases have been in Greece. I am glad that the ten Greek seamen have at least had their sentences of draft suspended. I take it their execution as no longer probable. We hear little about the many similar cases in Spain. In Eastern Europe where "popular democracy," through the recent fusion of Socialists and Communists, has become, in 1948, little different from Communism, a new wave of political trials has been taking place. The real charge against the Socialists recently condemned in Poland, for instance, would seem to be that they maintained as a potentially hostile organisation, the W.R.N.—the wartime name of the old Polish Socialist Party—which resisted their Lublin "liberators." Whether a wiser policy of permitting a loyal opposition would have persuaded a man like Kazimiciz Puzak to accept the new Poland I cannot guess. But his record from the revolutionary point of view is magnificent; cannot the Polish Government find a better home than prison for a man who took an active part in the 1905 revolution, spent seven years in solitary confinement in chains in the Tsarist fortress of Schlesselburg, was released by the Bolshevik revolution, fought steadily against the Pilsudski dictatorship as leader of the Polish Socialists and was chairman of the underground Polish Parliament during the Nazi occupation?

* * *

A correspondent sends me the following translation of an item from a Prague newspaper:

> Vaclav Ksada (43), shopkeeper from Dolni Pocernice (near Prague) was known in the former Social Democratic Party as a Right-wing element (I). Recently, Ksada received a letter from Germany from his friend Josef Stanek, who escaped from our country after February. The letter also contained a leaflet maligning the President of the Republic (Gottwald). Ksada multiplied the letter eight times and sent it out to friends, together with an alleged declaration of the late President Dr. Benes. When arrested, Ksada confessed to having illegally issued the periodical Social Democrat. The court condemned Ksada to 18 years' penal servitude.

* * *

It was already clear enough when I visited Kashmir nine months ago that the only possible solution was partition. Few people would face the fact either in Delhi or Lahore. Yet Poonch, Gilgit and most of the mountain areas of Kashmir obviously had become, in fact, part of Pakistan, while Jammu was clearly Indian. Sheik Abdullah, the one popular Kashmir leader, had a firm hold in the vale of Kashmir; he alone offered an alternative to its present miserable poverty. India has now put forward a proposal for a common-sense partition which Pakistan is reported to have turned down, I hope and believe not irrevocably. What Pakistan can hope for better than an acceptance of partition on the basis of the present lines already held by the two armies, I really cannot imagine. Karachi may reasonably demand a plebiscite for the vale of Kashmir, but to claim that it belongs to Pakistan simply because the inhabitants are Muslim is quite inadmissible. India is not Hindustan; there are about 40 million Muslims already living peaceably in India. Now that the Hyderabad dispute has been so easily disposed of, it will be tragic if India and Pakistan should not be able to reach a settlement in Kashmir and get down to the proper job of organising their own national life.

* * *

The Soviet *Literary Gazette* has been used before as the flame-thrower in a frontal assault on deviationists; so its latest attack on those who subscribe to the "reactionary distortions of the foreign quantum theoreticians" and the "Copenhagen bourgeois physics school" is significant. It is a pretty safe bet that the Lysenko purge in biology is about to be repeated in physics. Planck's *h* constant has always been for dialectical materialists the joker in the pack because it is liable to be played by the "idealists" as "God" or, at least, the "Master Physicist." Perhaps the *Gazette* has been too precipitate because "bourgeois" theoretical physics seems about to come to the rescue; Prof. E. A. Milne is bringing out a theoretical system in which Planck's *h* constant "varies secularly with the time." It is to be hoped that if the Moscow Academy (which has broken off its traditional correspondence with the Royal Society) decides to "purify" physics it will send its proceedings in English translation to Prof. H. Levy and Prof. J. D. Bernal so that they will not be placed in the dubious position Haldane finds himself in over Lysenko. In his not-too-happy broadcast, he still burked the main issue on the grounds that he has not got the fateful discussions (three months ago) translated from the Russian.

* * *

I was surprised to see that the dustman was still wearing an Australian "Digger" hat—the change to a new style was announced some time ago. "Hallo," I said to him, "I thought they were going to give you a new sort of hat?" "Yes, they are, at the end of the month." "Will you be sorry?" I asked. "No," he said, "these get dirty too quickly." He pulled off his hat and showed me the grubby inside rim. "This one's only three months old. I've been wearing them twenty years. They make your head go bald down the centre." He ran his hand reflectively over the thin patch on the top of his head. "All the fellows will tell you that. But we'll be all right with the new one. They're going to give us peaked caps. Then you won't be able to tell what any of us are—Postmen, Firemen or Army Officers."

CRITIC

PENNIES FROM HELL

THERE'S crisis in Paris, there's bad news from Peking,
There's a threat Communistic, and bloodshed communal,
But what is the news of which everyone's speaking?
Of nothing at all but the Lynskey Tribunal.
On Palestine, Argentine, Cyprus and China
The mind of the public is perfectly blank,
While the Board of Trade backstage
Swamps front and back page,
And the fierce light of Fleet Street is turned on the Bank.

Berlin may concern international leaders,
Rigor mortis persist on the Atom Committee,
But nothing engrosses industrious readers
Save the starry-eyed suckers who people the City—
The crime-free careers of deluded directors,
The plight of promoters who trusted too well,
The cordial contacts
For wangling contracts,
And football Pool gambling in pennies from hell.

The cold war announced between Lawther and Horner,
The delicate matter of Soviet genetics,
With strikes, fogs and murders, crowd into a corner,
While interest is centred on cocktails, cosmetics,
On parties where whisky is flowing like water,
On sherry, and suits, and American cars,
On coin freely tendered
For no services rendered,
In an atmosphere perfumed with costly cigars.

The public derives an escapist enjoyment
From detailed reports of encounters convivial,
In circles not subject to scheduled employment,
Where five-figure share-outs are reckoned as trivial.
To Socialist Britain's laborious millions
The *milieu* of butterflies strangely appeals,
The off-ration revels
On top business levels,
And the liberty boundless of certified eels.

Drab lives of the workers are transiently brightened
By the peep at high living the evidence gives—
Unless by a public enquiry enlightened,
Half the world doesn't know how the other half spivs.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5 - for each of the others printed.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10, Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

"It is a lie, isn't it?—It's not exactly a lie, sir, it is a commercial term."—Question and Answer at Church House Tribunal.—*News Chronicle.*
(M. Boothman.)

Designers of baby clothes are awaiting eagerly for the first public appearances of the Royal baby. His clothes will influence 1949 nursery styles.—*Star.*
(G. H. Tharme.)

The women started to gather soon after 11 o'clock, at the end of their five-hour shift. They demonstrated for two hours.

"We want sixpence, jolly, jolly sixpence," they sang with great gusto, but changed the figure to 3½d. when reminded by union officials that that was the actual amount of the claim.—*Daily Worker.*
(S. G. Burley.)

Because "all women in Chelsea are beautiful," the borough council will not hold a Civic Week beauty contest.—From the *Daily Mail*. (Miss M. Rich.)

Typist wanted, must be able to play piano or accordion.—Advt. in *Edinburgh Evening News*. (Mrs. Taylor.)

A police-inspector said to-day: "This is the most impertinent case of shoplifting. We are not obliged to give a motive but in this case we can. She says she was providing the articles for a Christmas bazaar in aid of Communist Party funds."—*Evening Standard*. (Mrs. B. W. Dalton.)

CORPUN CRUSADER

READERS of the popular press will have read—we fear with some amusement—the case of a certain Mr. Wildman, who delivered a lecture on the virtues of corporal punishment before an audience of schoolboys and girls, who responded by administering corporal punishment to the lecturer. They seem to have paid careful attention to his instructions by giving him "six of the best" on the spot he himself recommended as "provided by nature" for the purpose. They also used one of his own "30-in., dragon smoking malacca" canes, particularly commended by him as "very pliant and punishing." They only seemed to have failed to follow his precepts in one particular; Mr. Wildman has frequently laid stress on the desirability of baring the buttocks and carrying out the punishment ceremoniously and with due regard to the importance of humiliating the victim.

As this matter may be raised in the courts, it would be improper for us to comment on it. Some of the facts about Mr. Wildman's remarkable crusade for the retention of corporal punishment may, however, be of interest. Mr. Eric Wildman is the founder of "a national society for the retention of corporal punishment in schools," which demands the extension (rather than the modest retention) of the whipping of boys and girls in order that our children "grow up as honest and upright citizens worthy of this country's heritage." Like many good men before him, Mr. Wildman apparently earns his living as a champion of the cause that he has so much at heart. His office in Kensington, when visited, displayed a striking variety of whips, canes and tawses, and his advertising leaflet reveals a nice discrimination in these instruments of punishment, and includes some details which may puzzle the unsophisticated reader. Some reputable papers have at times accepted his advertisements for canes and tawses. His own advertisement offers such special lines as "a rather heavy cane of the Rattan family with a shiny bark," and a "tape grip" (price 3s. 6d., or three for 8s.); straps and tawses may also be had "with chrome finish" for 13s. 6d. each. There is a "Carnival Tawse with curved blade finish" (18in. long, which costs 10s.). Another mysterious item in Mr. Wildman's list reads, "fancy dress accessories, etc." An interested enquirer who called at his establishment in order to learn more of his aims was told by Mr. Wildman that he was at one time a schoolmaster, had served in the Merchant Navy, and had taught in Bible classes. Of his daughter, aged 18 months, he added: "She is too young for caning yet, but I have some beautiful canes waiting for her in a few years' time." He also gave a somewhat detailed description of how a naughty boy or girl should be undressed, held firmly across the knee and lectured in rhythm with the strokes of the cane.

Mr. Wildman does not restrict his activities to merely selling the instruments of punishment and instructing parents and schoolmasters about the correct methods of whipping. His crusade is supported by quotations from the Old Testament, is carried on always in terms of high moral principle and with careful injunction to avoid undue severity. It naturally leads him to seek a wider audience. Until a few months ago he published a "Corpun Bulletin," a cyclostyled document which is of unusual interest to the psychologist. From time to time he issued a "bumper" number. This remarkable publication consisted largely of letters purporting to give a detailed account by parents, schoolmasters and mistresses of their successful use of corporal punishment. Mr. Wildman did not publish the name and address of the schoolmistress who found it necessary frequently to cane many of her girls, up to and over the age of adolescence, and discussed the question whether girls of sixteen should have their knickers removed before whipping. Nor did he reveal the name of the "artist" who describes the whipping he inflicted in his studio on recalcitrant models, conveniently undressed for professional reasons. Questions have been publicly asked whether such descriptive passages served other ends besides the regeneration of the youth of England.

Owing, he has stated, to doubts that were thrown on the authenticity of these accounts, Mr. Wildman ceased to issue his bulletin, and has since published a more cautious cyclostyled document called "The Retentionist." Exactly what public subscribes to this publication we do not know, but it seems clear that Mr. Wildman, who not long ago invited the national press to a public meeting to advocate corporal punishment, is, above all, anxious to obtain publicity for his crusade. If so, the boys and girls of Mr. Copping's school have satisfied his ambition, even if not quite in the manner he desired.

THE BERLIN PLEBISCITE

THINGS have come to an ugly pass in this city. There can rarely have been a more dangerously paradoxical situation than that in which Berliners next Sunday will cast their votes for a new City Assembly and municipal administration. At the moment, when the Allied Powers themselves seem less certain than ever what to do or not do with them, the inhabitants of the contested city are called upon to make up their minds by joining in a demonstration which, for all they know, may fatally affect their immediate future. Whether they vote or abstain, December 5 is likely to sweep away the last remnants of the uneasy truce which still holds the city together.

This is a plebiscite and not an election in the accepted sense. The question which of the three democratic parties will obtain a majority is of secondary importance, and may in the event be without any practical significance. It is a plebiscite for or against Communism, Russians and the Soviet totalitarian system and, therefore, by straight implication, a vote of confidence for the Western Powers. Nobody at the moment is asking the crucial question what the Western Powers will or can do with it when they have got it.

In the 1946 elections, which resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Social Democrats and reduced the Communists to third place, the issue was different. The three democratic parties then fought simultaneously on two separate levels. Jointly they opposed the Communists in a common anti-totalitarian front, while they individually battled against each other for first place. This time it is not so much a contest between local political parties (although there is a rather sharper internecine strife between Socialists and Christian Democrats than might have been expected), but a straight battle between two worlds. It would be wrong, therefore, to say that the Communists are not participating. They are not fighting for votes this time, but are fighting the election as a whole; and they have entered the fight with determination and bitterness.

General Kotikov, Soviet Commandant, has declared the election illegal in his sector, and no polling will take place east of Brandenburg Gate, while in the three Western sectors the Socialist Unity Party has refused to put up candidates. Yet it would be difficult to say on which side of the Potsdamer Platz electioneering is noisier. But while in the Western boroughs the leaders of the three democratic parties are urging not too well-attended meetings to express their confidence in the West by voting, Communist speakers, not only in the Soviet sector but throughout the city, are pleading with voters to put on record their non-confidence in the West by boycotting the election and abstaining. As a result, the foggy winter air is filled with the clangour of vilification, each side calling the other "splitters," "tools of ruthless foreign Powers," "criminals" and worse names. Indeed, the only people in this situation who will emerge as guiltless innocents are the Nazis. They are disfranchised and may not vote in any case.

The Soviet charge that the elections are illegal is false. Although elections at this juncture may be tactically unwise, and one can't be sure they aren't, they are certainly entirely legal. The present Assembly and municipal administration were elected on October 20, 1946, for a term of two years. Under the provisional city constitution, which was adopted with quadripartite approval, new elections must take place this autumn. The only alternative would have been to prolong the life of the present Assembly and administration for a further period and leave things more or less as they are.

This was clearly what Kotikov wanted when, on October 20, he made his approval of an ordinance defining electoral procedure conditional on the fulfilment of a number of prerequisites, which Dr. Friedensburg, the acting Mayor, was unable to meet. Kotikov demanded the rescinding of a number of regulations, restricting or banning the activities of Communist or Communist-directed organisations, such as the *Kulturbund*, which had been imposed by Western Commandants in their sectors; the release of Communists held for political or criminal offences, without offering reciprocity in his sector; the admission of "democratic" parties only, and the elimination of all "warmongers" such as Kaiser, Neumann, Reuter and others from the lists of candidates.

Dr. Friedensburg and his administration were faced with a dire dilemma. It was clear that they could not meet the Soviet demands, because fulfilment of most of them was quite beyond their power and authority. The alternatives were to go ahead without Soviet approval, or suspend the elections for an indefinite period. Feeling that things had gone too far already and that Kotikov would use the breathing space afforded by suspension merely to complete his work of paralysing the existing administration by more demonstrations, dismissals and arrests, they chose what looked like the lesser evil and went ahead. Kotikov instructed the S.E.D. not to participate, but forthwith to start a campaign to induce voters in the Western sectors to stay away. The *Magistrat*, on its part, ruled that boroughs where polling was impossible would continue to be represented by the deputies elected in 1946, until such time as by-elections could be held.

Whichever way the vote goes on Sunday, Kotikov is most unlikely to recognise the new Assembly and Council. There is no doubt the S.E.D. would have suffered crushing losses throughout the city in a free election this winter had it chosen to fight it. The blockade and the unending restrictive measures inside the city imposed by the Russians would have seen to that. This direct defeat they are avoiding. But if the polling on Sunday is, in fact, as heavy as forecasters predict, their indirect débâcle will be no less severe; and the question is how they will react. Indications are that the democratic parties will find that their fight with a shadow, far from leaving things as they were, has resulted in the city being finally and irrevocably split into two separate, hermetically sealed, implacably hostile compartments. The odds are that Kotikov, on the morning of December 6, will officially withdraw recognition from the Assembly and City Council, declare it illegal and authorise a temporary administration with an unchallengeable Communist majority to take over in the Soviet sector with the claim that it is representative of all Berlin.

Berlin, November 29. PETER MENDELSOHN

LEGAL AID FOR THE NEW POOR

LEGAL aid for the poor has graduated from private charity to State responsibility in the past thirty-five years. In 1914, the people who drafted the first "Poor Persons Rules" for aiding litigants who owned less than £50 based them on "the hope that a fund might be created by voluntary contributions from the public, assisted perhaps (*sic*) by contributions from the Treasury" (Rushcliffe Report, page 2). World War I gave this the *coup de grâce*, and the scheme limped ahead on Treasury aid alone. In 1919 Mr. Justice Lawrence's Committee discovered that three out of every four applicants for legal aid in the High Court were being turned down. This Committee introduced the rule about the £2 a week income, presumably in the hope of encouraging greater generosity from the "Prescribed Officers" who were dealing with applicants.

Meanwhile criminal cases had been dealt with under an Act of 1903, which allowed £1 3s. 6d. for a barrister and £2 2s. for a solicitor defending a pauper who seemed to have a reasonable answer to a charge of *indictable* crime. And this went on until in 1930, as a direct result of a campaign by the Howard League for Penal Reform, a new Poor Prisoners' Defence Act raised the professional fees payable, extended the aid to summary trials as well as indictable crimes, made it compulsory in murder cases, and allowed for the assignment, at need, of a K.C. and a junior. This Act, whose operation was to prove sadly disappointing to its sponsors, was hamstrung in its application to summary criminal trials by its provision that a man could have legal aid only if "by reason of the *gravity* of the charge or of exceptional circumstances" it was "desirable in the interests of justice." Many were the arguments among justices and their clerks on the question whether or not a particular charge was "grave." You might think that any indictable offence was grave enough, but even housebreaking was sometimes held not to justify a certificate. No income limit was prescribed. In some courts a prisoner had to be destitute to qualify for aid; in others he had to be palpably innocent; in very few would he get legal aid if he pleaded guilty—precisely when, in many cases, legal experience can be most helpful both to prisoner and Bench.

All this went on without change until the Rushcliffe Committee reported in 1945. This report seemed revolutionary. It proposed legal aid for all "civil" litigants (including, for the first time, County Court cases) whose income was not more than £420 *after payment of income tax;* the deletion of the clause about the "gravity of the charge" in criminal cases; and the suggestion that, whenever there is any doubt whether a prisoner ought to have legal aid, it should be resolved in favour of letting him have it.

In these matters, the new Legal Aid and Advice Bill does all that the Rushcliffe Report wanted—and more. It calls the £420 a man's "disposable" income, but in addition to income tax it allows for the maintenance of dependants, interest payable on loans (mortgages, etc.), rates, rent and "other matters for which the person in question must or reasonably may provide." If you add all these to a net £420 you are getting near the thousand-a-year mark. But if a man's "disposable" income exceeds £156 a year, he can be required to pay as much as half the difference between that figure and his actual income. So a thousand-a-year man would be regarded as able to stand the costs of an action up to £422, subject to certain adjustments; and there are similar provisions about "disposable" capital. The voluntary "Poor Man's Lawyer" centres are to be recognised and provided with salaried solicitors. A Legal Aid Fund will be set up and administered by the Law Society, drawing its expenses from the Treasury through the Lord Chancellor. The Lord Chancellor is to make rules for carrying the Act into effect. He can add to the list of courts in which legal aid is to be available (at the moment it excludes industrial tribunals and courts of inquiry), and he can, though he probably won't, extend the scope of it to actions which at present the Bill rules out—such as libel and slander, breach of promise and gold-digging actions by common informers.

It is unquestionably a good Bill; and though it has been drafted with a simplicity that will send up many legal eyebrows, its main intentions will arouse little opposition. Beyond doubt, some people will resent the authority given to the National Assistance Board to determine an applicant's "disposable" income and capital, but these will be people who desire, even if they do so unconsciously, to have their cake and eat it. There is, however, one step that could still be taken administratively to smooth out some remaining difference between rich and poor in the criminal courts. At the instigation of the Home Office, a defendant who receives a summons alleging the commission of an offence now finds attached to it a printed slip telling him of his right to apply to the Magistrates for legal aid if he cannot afford to pay a solicitor—and he is now to be allowed to do this by letter. A person taken into custody by the police is handed a similar slip by the officer in charge of the police station. (Justices' clerks are allowed a discretion as to the cases in which this communication may be necessary: the police are allowed none, so that in theory they give one to all their drunks, beggars, prostitutes and side-street footballers.) The one issued at police stations tells the prisoner that he can apply to the court for legal aid when he gets there. Now, when a well-to-do man is arrested by the police he generally demands that his solicitor be called at once. Even if the arrest occurs in the small hours of the morning this is always done, and the prisoner makes no statement to the police until his solicitor is there. But by the time the poor man gets his legal adviser, i.e., after his appearance in court, he may have been in police custody twenty-four hours and made statements damaging to his defence.

A possible solution is to authorise the police to assess a prisoner's means by a visit to his home (as they already do if he wants bail), and to call in a panel solicitor in suitable cases. If the court subsequently refused to grant legal aid, the solicitor's fee would have to be paid from police funds); but all these public funds are pseudonyms for John Citizen, and there is no case for shielding one of them at the expense of another, merely because a man's offence happens to have exposed him to summary arrest. You can be arrested for stealing a bag of roast chestnuts, but if you publish a false balance-sheet you get a summons and about a fortnight's notice for the preparation of your defence.

The crushing expense of legal proceedings will still make it a major misfortune for many people to get involved in the civil courts, but this Bill goes far to remedy that injustice. It should not be forgotten that in criminal proceedings for an indictable offence, the expenses of all the witnesses on both sides, for travelling, hotel accommodation, and loss of business or wages, are paid out of County Funds—unless the Judge orders otherwise, which is rare. It cost over £4,000 to defend and prosecute John Camb at Winchester Assizes last March for the murder of an actress on the liner "Durban Castle," and every penny was paid from the County Fund. This procedure has been in operation for forty years, but for some reason it seldom gets mentioned when we are grumbling about the cost of the law. The whole system is gradually moving forwards—impelled (some would say) by the growing recognition of the fact that almost everything in the citizen's life which is not forbidden is now compulsory!

C. H. ROLPH

FOUR YEAR PLAN

The Marshall countries fail to comprehend
Why Britain skimps, while all around her spend;
In present hardship Britain puts her trust,
That she may boom, while all around her bust.

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE

IN every town between the Pacific and Denver, there is a Chamber of Commerce. Its secretary, as he sits at his desk and catalogues the merits and resources of his community, has only to glance through his window to see the most obvious attraction: the mountains. To this he adds the height of the town or, if it falls ignominiously below a mile above sea level, he dilates on its proximity to natural wonders and its own peculiar claim to popular attention, be it the "apple capital of the world," "the richest hill on earth," or the "site of the face on the bar-room floor." It was in such a mood of local patriotism that a small band of Washington enthusiasts recently sought to raise the height of their Mount Rainier by twenty feet to dwarf anything the proud Coloradans could offer.

The tourist is still a basic source of income in the mountain States, whether he visits to fish, to collect souvenir pennants for his car from caves, dams and geysers, or merely to play dice and the gambling machines. Yet around him and beneath him, as he drives through empty ranges and narrow defiles, lies the real, and to some extent, still undeveloped wealth of these States: a list of mineral reserves as long as a column of this journal. There, in part, is the history of this wild and tough country; there, probably, its best hope for the future; there, certainly, its tragedy. For more than two generations, miners have dug in search of fortunes, occasionally for themselves, more often for the great corporations which have increasingly dominated the economy of these States, grown rich from them and deliberately discouraged all efforts to diversify and balance their economic structure. Together with the South, these States have learnt what domestic colonisation, intense exploitation, absentee ownership and political control by rich corporations can do to thwart and distort their proper progress.

Within this general pattern, there are wide variations. Utah, for instance, whose history has been so largely shaped by the early Mormon settlement, is obviously a different case from Montana, the classic example of a company State. The past story of the Anaconda Copper Company and its ally, Montana Power and Light, is a legend. Controlling the press, the radio stations, hotels, railroads, Montana representatives in Congress and, of course, the State Legislature, it dragged metal from that four square miles of hill, through which more than five thousand miles of workings run, on which is built the squalid town of Butte. From under its subsiding streets has come more than one-sixth of all the copper produced in the world in the last two generations, a haul worth more than 2,500 million dollars. Yet you could search this town of thirty thousand people—who have ample dives and dens for recreation—for any sign but mine shafts and slums of the wealth it has created. Butte is an ugly and disgraceful monument to the search for corporate wealth.

The physical appearance of Butte reflects Montana politics. Yet, in spite of corruption and the intolerance of unchecked corporate power, the opposition was never silenced. Unions had to be tough to survive what, especially in the early days, was a guerilla war. Checked one way, the miners found plenty of allies willing to vote Walsh and Burton Wheeler into the Senate as avowed opponents of the company, to defeat Wheeler in the Democratic primary once he became acceptable to the sixth floor in Hennesey's department store in Butte—Anaconda's offices—and to keep Murray, another liberal Senator, in Washington. Some things the Montana voter cannot do, yet. The economy by which he lives is unbalanced and very susceptible to fluctuation. He has few independent sources of news. Whether professional or proletarian, he must still depend to a large degree on the company or its allies and affiliates for his living. In most things, unless he gets out, he must get on with them.

Are things changing in Montana? John Kinsey Howard, who has written one of the most able indictments of the spoliation of the State, recently published an article in *Harper's* suggesting that at long last Anaconda was undergoing a change of heart. Although he reports that deep suspicion still lingers—I found that this statement is perfectly true—he believes that in the last year the old era came to an end. The company has recently opened a rather fine club, at a cost of 500,000 dollars, for its employees, the first action of this kind it has ever taken. It is backing a housing project this crumbling town badly needs and is pushing a scheme for a civic recreation centre which will take another 400,000 dollars a year in taxes from the company. Admittedly, these funds come from a net income which last year exceeded forty million dollars. But, Howard argues, this is an advance on the part of a corporation notorious for its tight purse. The reason for all this? Perhaps a little shame at the bad press that Gunther gave Butte throughout the country in his *Inside U.S.A.* But also Anaconda has a huge new project under way to get out the remaining ore under Butte by letting the hill gradually collapse upon big mechanical excavators, which will increasingly replace the conventional mining methods which have already made the hill a honeycomb. This scheme will take many years. If Butte loses its population steadily—thousands left in the last decade—if it drifts towards a ghost town, like those which litter the mountains, and dissatisfaction increases among those who remain, Anaconda might find itself without a labour force capable of sustaining its new and heavy investment. Wisdom today might dictate improved labour and public relations, genuine efforts to make Butte a habitable and pleasant place.

Drive southwards through Idaho, so proud of its potatoes that a coloured spud is embossed on every car licence-plate, and the picture changes. Utah is an arid rocky State, and most of its people live in a narrow valley a hundred miles long, bounded on the East by the Wasatch range and on the West by the Salt Lake and the desert salt flats. This State, too, has absentee ownership and has suffered from discriminatory rail charges. Yet its economy is diversified, its people hard-working and prosperous, its politics clean and effective. While extractive industry is vitally important—last year's metal production alone was worth more than 180 million dollars—and the known reserves of more than 200,000 million tons of coal have barely been tapped as yet, this State is also an important source of timber, live stock and many other agricultural products.

Much of their expansion still lies ahead. The war did much to accelerate that process. It brought Utah the Geneva Steel Works—a subsidiary, it is true, of U.S. Steel—the most modern plant in the country, worth more than fifty million pounds, and the first real answer to Western demands for a local steel industry. It brought other forms of industrial development, many which—such as the huge Navy depot—seem destined to stay. It takes Gus Backmann, the secretary of the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce, seventeen pages of single-space typescript, merely to list the resources and production of Utah.

How far is the Church of Latter Day Saints responsible for Utah's well-being? The Church, ever since Brigham Young brought the first Mormon pioneers down out of Emigration Canyon and said: "This is the place!" has been in business and behind enterprise. Young did more than plan the clean and charming settlements which run up the valley. He laid the foundations of a wealthy Church which to-day owns fine department stores, hotels, insurance companies, banks, a paper and a radio station. The Church still claims more than two-thirds of the State population as believers. Yet it has never run Utah as Anaconda has run Montana. Opposed to smoking, it must accept the fact that a large proportion of its members are nicotine addicts. More strongly opposed to liquor, it saw Utah vote out prohibition by a two-to-one majority. Highly conservative in politics, the Church leadership could never carry their followers against Roosevelt, though nominal Church membership is almost essential to any candidate. Why, then, has the Church survived and, undoubtedly, contributed much to civic and economic well-being?

The first answer is one given me by many non-Mormon business men. The Church, they say, has played fair in business, and has given good value at competitive prices. Secondly—and this is the explanation offered by many who think the religious doctrines of the Church are ludicrous—its ethic of social service and its practice of intense activity have combined to provide the State with a moral purpose and a machine through which that purpose can be expressed. Although the Church revenues are secret, its published expenditures total more than twelve million dollars annually. Spiritually and structurally, this is one of the least democratic churches in the world. Yet, because its members believe that its work is socially desirable and necessary, because it finds something for everyone, from the children upwards, to do all the time, it remains a power.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

KING-EMPEROR'S ENGLISH

WHILE we are waiting in friendly suspense for Indians to decide whether they will retain some political ties with the Commonwealth, they have settled among themselves, with an approach to unanimity, a question of even greater importance. They have walked out of the English-speaking world. In a sense, up to 1947, they were within it. English was the official language of the whole Peninsula. It was the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education; it was the language in which most business above the retail level was conducted; every technician had to know it. It was, moreover, the *lingua franca* in which educated men drawn from distant provinces usually conversed when they met. Finally, it was the literary language which eminent Indian writers, among them Gandhi and Nehru, usually chose. And yet, the Indians who spoke and wrote English were a minute minority among their four hundred millions.

There has been nothing resembling this paradox since Latin held a similar position, in Europe, all the way from Oxford to Cracow. Inevitably the march of democracy has brought it to an end. There will be a transitional period of five years, during which English will share with Hindi and the provincial vernaculars the status of an official language. It is ceasing, even sooner, to be the medium of instruction in schools and universities. How long, in social life, in literature and business it will survive as an unofficial *lingua franca* is one of the most intriguing questions of the future. It will, of course, be studied in secondary schools, much as we study French. But how many Indians will speak and write it fifty years hence, fluently and correctly, as millions of them do to-day?

So ends the dream in which Macaulay indulged, when in 1835 he wrote his famous Minute on education. Indians were not destined to become English-speaking Whigs and Christians. They have rejected, after a century's experience, a language associated in their minds with the Conquest. Few, even among conservative Englishmen, would defend to-day the educational scheme which Bentinck and Macaulay inaugurated. It cut off the schoolboy from all his early memories. It propelled him into an alien world whose thought had no relation to his ancestral traditions. It made him a quasi-foreigner among his kindred. It delayed his mental development for several years until he had mastered the new vehicle of expression, and when at last he had acquired a fairly good Western education, this mentally expatriated Indian had to face the colour bar which isolated him from the *Herrenvolk* whose culture he had absorbed. Worst of all, Indians understood only too well that the aim of the East India Company was to train minor functionaries and clerks for the conduct of official and commercial business.

Against this imposed language Nationalist India reacted violently, and when Gandhi launched his first movement of Civil Disobedience in 1920, the most popular item in his programme was the boycott of all the Government's schools and the creation in their place of short-lived "national" colleges, in which Indian languages were the medium of instruction. What he tried to do then, prematurely, Independent India is carrying out to-day, methodically and with adequate resources. For lack of trained teachers and vernacular text-books, the transition will not be easy, but the eventual gain should be immense, as the labour of learning is lightened and the divorce ended between lessons and tradition.

But will there be no loss to set against this gain? Indians who mean to do anything in science or in commerce will still have to learn English, which opens the doors not only of America and the Commonwealth, but of China and Japan. Until good translations are available in Hindi, English is, moreover, the only medium through which Indians can enjoy the thought and literature, ancient and modern, of the world beyond their own shores. If in future they pay no more attention to English than the average middle-class Englishman pays to French, will they not isolate themselves and suffer a decline in their cultural standards? Of this danger thoughtful Indians are already aware, and they may discover how to combat it. In a pamphlet* as wise as it is witty, Mulk Raj Anand, whose novels written in English have helped so many of us to understand the mind of contemporary India, has pointed the way to a happier prospect. What Indians learned under the Conquest in official schools was not English at all; it was the King-Emperor's English, the language of the Penal Code, White Papers and Minutes, school-books and trade catalogues. Those of them who have come to love our literature and to use our language with distinction and respect, absorbed it, he argues, not from the teachers who crammed them for the examinations that played a tyrannous part in India's economic life; they learned it from their own unguided reading, or from their studies at an English University. It is only King-Emperor's English that India is discarding, the speech which the intellectual proletariat got by rote, because it was the ladder to promotion. Those who learn English in the future will do so because they value its music and the way of thinking it enshrines. "This English we prize so much, as against the King-Emperor's English, was never the language of our conquerors, for it is not they who cherished it or brought it into our lives; no, it was the language we ourselves took from the heart of England, not as an act of submission but through a genuine love of its graces." He even predicts that many Indians will continue to write in it, and that "the Indo-Anglian school of literature" will flourish as never before. If his vision is clear-sighted, English in India, and possibly in China also, may evolve as Greek did, during the Hellenistic phase, into a means of communication used by millions of highly educated men who found it more suitable than their mother-tongues.

Whether this will happen depends largely on the success of Hindi, as it evolves, with official support, into a *lingua franca* for the whole Peninsula. It is not easy to estimate its prospects. It has to compete first of all with English, in which the present generation of the Indian middle-class has a vested interest. In Bengal, and to a less extent in Gujerat, a vigorous vernacular literature in the languages of these provinces has already established itself in the affections of the people. In the South, with its Dravidian languages, wholly alien to Hindi in origin and structure, it will establish itself with greater difficulty than in the Aryan-speaking north. The

* *The King-Emperor's English. Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay.*

case for its general adoption would be stronger if it could serve as a link to unite India and Pakistan. As a spoken language the Urdu of the Muslim State is basically identical with Hindi, but Hindus and Muslims insist on using different scripts. The two literary languages are, moreover, tending to diverge, since Hindi borrows from Sanscrit to build up its scientific vocabulary, while Urdu draws on Persian and Arabic. These are the obstacles which Hindi has to overcome, but it starts with some great advantages. It is the mother-tongue of an immense and compact population in Northern and Central India. Some of the provincial vernaculars, notably Punjabi, diverge from it no further than Scots does from English. Even Bengali is hardly further from it than Dutch is from German, or Portuguese from Spanish. Save in the south, any quick-witted child can learn to understand it with ease, though to speak it correctly may give him a good deal of trouble, since for all its similarity to his mother-tongue, its idioms and its sound-patterns are its own.

What languages Indians will speak and read fifty years hence is a question we might answer if we could foresee the course of world history. Where will Russia's cultural influence end? In how many continents will American be the dominant language? Much in the Peninsula itself will depend on technical chances impossible to forecast. An enterprising publisher, who produced a library of all the world's classics brilliantly translated into Hindi, at a low price and in an attractive form, might establish this language as the only acceptable *lingua franca* for the whole Peninsula. A rival firm which did the same thing in English, with contemporary books thrown in, might tip the scales in favour of the world's common language. Broadcasting, when each village has its communal set, may be an influence even more decisive. If, on the other hand, each provincial and State government uses all its resources to further the local vernacular, Hindi may never establish itself far beyond its native area. In the federal India of to-morrow an official language will be less important than it was under a centralised autocracy. Indians will master two languages, but can they be at home in three? A man who starts with Tamil may acquire either Hindi or English perfectly, but seldom both. Nothing is certain in this struggle for survival, save that the King-Emperor's English is doomed. But that other English, of which Anand has written so warmly, may still have before it a brilliant future. H. N. BRAILSFORD

MAHABALIPURAM

All alone from his dark sanctum the lingam fronts,
affronts the sea,
The world's dead weight of breakers against sapling, bull and candle
Where worship comes no more,
Yet how should these cowherds and gods continue
to dance in the rock
All the long night along ocean in this lost border
between
That thronging gonging mirage of paddy and toddy
and dung
And this uninhabited shore?
Silent except for the squadrons of water, the dark
grim chargers launched from Australia,
Dark except for their manes of phosphorus, silent
in spite of the rockhewn windmill
That brandishes axe and knife—
The many-handed virgin facing, abasing the Oaf,
the Demon,
Dark in spite of the rockhewn radiance of Vishnu
and Shiva and silent
In spite of the mooing of Krishna's herds; yet in
spite of this darkness and silence
Behold what a joy of life—
Which goes with an awe and a horror; the innocence which surmounted the guilt
Thirteen centuries back when an artist eyeing
this litter of granite
Saw it for waste and took
A header below the rockface, found there already
like a ballet of fishes
Passing, repassing each other, these shapes of
gopi and goblin,
Of elephant, serpent and antelope, saw them and
grasped his mallet
And cried with a clear stroke: Look!
And now we look, we to whom mantra and mudra
mean little,
And who find in this Hindu world a zone that is
ultra-violet
Balanced by an infra-red,
Austerity and orgy alike being phrased, it seems,
in a strange dead language
But now that we look without trying to learn and
only look in the act of leaping
After the sculptor into the rockface, now we can
see, if not hear, those phrases
To be neither strange nor dead.
Not strange for all their farouche iconography, not
so strange as our own dreams
Because better ordered, these are the dreams we
have needed
Since we forgot how to dance;
This god asleep on the snake is the archetype of
the sleep that we lost
When we were born, and these wingless figures
that fly
Merely by bending the knee are the earnest of
what we aspire to
Apart from science and chance
And the largest of all these reliefs, forty foot high
by a hundred,
Is large in more senses than one, including both
heaven and the animal kingdom
And a grain of salt as well,
For the saint stands always above on one leg
fasting
Acquiring power while the smug hypocritical cat
beneath him
Stands on his hindlegs too admired by the mice
Whom the sculptor did not tell.
Nor did he tell the simple and beautiful rustics
Who saved from their doom by Krishna are once
more busy and happy
Absorbed in themselves and Him,
That trapped in this way in the rock their idyll
would live to excite
And at once annul the lust and the envy of tourists
Taking them out of themselves and to find themselves in a world
That has neither rift nor rim:
A monochrome world that has all the indulgence
of colour,
A still world whose every harmonic is audible,
Largesse of spirit and stone;
Created things for once and for all featured in
full while for once and never
The creator who is destroyer stands at the last
point of land
Featureless; in a dark cell, a phallus of granite,
as abstract
As the North Pole; as alone.
But the visitor must move on and the waves
assault the temple,
Living granite against dead water, and time with
its weathering action
Make phrase and feature blurred;
Still from today we know what an avatar is, we
have seen
God take shape and dwell among shapes, we have
felt
Our ageing limbs respond to those ageless limbs
in the rock
Reliefs. Relief is the word.

LOUIS MACNEICE

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The Arts and Entertainment

EXPLORERS

ONE of the most enjoyable programmes of the season was presented one day last week at the Kingsway Hall by a body known as the Exploratory Concert Society. Posters had advertised this occasion as "A Concert for Connoisseurs"; and so prickly have people become that the phrase is said to have caused mild irritation in some quarters. And yet it proved an accurate and sensible description of the proceedings; just as "connoisseur" is surely the right word for a concert-goer familiar enough with the standard repertory not to wish to hear it again and again in merely standard performances, and aware that it represents only a fraction—and sometimes a curiously selected fraction—of the music he would like to hear. For the last two years the musical connoisseur has been wonderfully catered for by the Third Programme, which has explored large and valuable tracts of country entirely neglected in our concert rooms and opera houses. But within the last few weeks, reception of this programme, always chancy, has taken a sharp turn for the worse: a sudden increase in power on the part of the transmitter at Tunis has caused engineers and baffled listeners to mutter in unison: *delenda est Carthago*. Simultaneously there have been signs, so far no bigger than a man's hand, that the Third Programme, now under new management, has begun to feel nervous (perhaps beneath the baleful gaze of Listener Research) about the audacious and brilliant scheme inaugurated by Mr. George Barnes. There may be nothing much in this; but it might as well be clearly recognised that the moment the Third Programme begins to shy at the word "highbrow," it will immediately lose its point.

Meanwhile, flourish the gallant explorers! At the Kingsway Hall, the Leighton Lucas Orchestra played, with spirit and sensibility, a programme which contained nothing hackneyed and nothing dull, and included two masterpieces, one of which was almost completely unknown. This was Albert Roussel's *Concert pour Petit Orchestre*, which is said to be a rarity even in France, though it is hard to see why. The first movement opens with a mordant, striking little phrase, and perhaps the sinister colour of this movement, together with its extreme clarity of design, has been found disquieting; the *Andante* is serenely and concisely classical; and though the wild rustic waltz which forms the final movement seemed on this occasion to miss fire, its failure may have been due to a tempo which was certainly not *presto*. The other masterpiece was that exquisite early Mozart Symphony in C which no one else except Sir Thomas Beecham seems to care about. It was pleasant to make acquaintance with Germaine Tailleferre's unpretentious *Harp Concertino*, a charming souvenir of the Twenties which maintains its individual delicacy of style until the last movement brings a watered down version of the Fair Scene in *Petrouchka*. Stravinsky himself was represented by his *Danses Concertantes* of 1942, a work which was new to me and yet seemed familiar from its close resemblance to parts of *Jeu de Cartes* and *Dumbarton Oaks*, and other works of the same period; thoroughly enjoyable from bar to bar, with its sauntering tunes, calculated *gaucheries*, and clean, chunky texture like bits of ice in a soft drink, it nevertheless wholly lacked the strong onward pull of necessity. This jolly concert ended in pure farce with the riotous, infectious hubbub of Ibert's *Divertissement*, which was originally written as incidental music to *The Italian Straw Hat*—Labiche's play, of course, not Renée Clair's enchanting silent film; but I wish some ingenious person would see whether Ibert's music could not be turned into an accompanying soundtrack, for it catches the mad spirit of the piece to perfection.

At the Central Hall (how hard, everywhere, are the seats on which connoisseurs have to sit!) another group of explorers, the Morley College Concerts Society, presented an exceedingly mixed programme: two Masses of diametrically opposed character (Byrd in five parts and Mozart's "Coronation"), between which Walter Goehr conducted Vaughan Williams's *Riders to the Sea*, a neglected setting of Synge's one-act play in the quietist style of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. It proved to be an extremely evocative study in half-tones, leading up with perfect judgment to a great ritualised outburst of sorrow, followed by a final scene of calm acceptance. If there were a singer in England who could declaim with the authority and rhythmical subtlety of Claire Croiza, she would find a wonderful part in Maurya; Kathleen Ferrier was impressive at the climax, but there is something obstinately sensible and British, almost Clara-Butt-like, about the timbre and style of this singer which makes it difficult to imagine her as a fatalistic shawl-clad Aran islander. If well cast and imaginatively staged, with a set by some artist of congenial temperament (say, Adrian Ryan), this brief piece could make a profound impression in the theatre, and I hope that somebody from Sadler's Wells was among the audience at the Central Hall. Vaughan Williams's misadventures in the opera house are mostly traceable to his own independent and unsophisticated temperament; but *Riders to the Sea* has never had a chance. DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RADIO NOTES

STRINDBERG, it seems, has become almost the B.B.C.'s favourite dramatist. Within the past twelve months it has given us the *The Father*, *Easter* and *Miss Julie*, and last week came the most ambitious production of all, of the late and relatively unfamiliar *A Dream Play*. Because it was unfamiliar—I could find no copy of Miss Sprigge's or any other translation on the shelves of the London Library—it was extraordinarily difficult to judge. Its historical importance, as an early experiment in Expressionism and in the rendering in dramatic terms of the unconscious, was obvious enough, but one will need to hear it more than once before being able to decide whether it was successful, first as drama and then as radio-drama. Theoretically, the fluidity of the medium of radio should be ideal for representing the fluidity of a dream; and yet the play seemed to me to make excessive demands on the visual imagination; it was, for instance, difficult to hold in the mind's eye the idea of a castle growing like a tree and finally flowering amid flames into a giant chrysanthemum, especially where there was no memory of a stage production to help. The writing, though here I speak with diffidence since I do not know Swedish and therefore cannot assess the adequacy of the translation, seemed most uneven. Of the power of the satirical passages, the conflict between man and wife in marriage, the episode of the man who finds himself suddenly back at school and treated as a schoolboy, there was no doubt at all: here was the ferocious Strindberg we knew of old. But I was much less happy with the poetry, which suggested a false, dated romanticism reminiscent of nothing so much as Lawrence Hope's sentimental renderings of Indian philosophy. But Mr. Peter Watts is to be congratulated on his excellent production of the play, as is Mr. Valentine Dyall on his performances of the officer, the lawyer and the poet, a truly striking *tour-de-force*.

Doubtless, more Strindberg is in store for us. I I can imagine a most fascinating Third Programme production of *The Road to Damascus*; but I hope that we may also have a chance of hearing that other, less well-known and more attractive Strindberg, the author of the early historical plays, in particular of that great play *Gustavus Vasa*. But when we next have Strindberg, especially if we are to have him in the Home Service, may we have the way prepared for us? May we have introductory talks? A short article in *The Radio Times* is not nearly enough. It was a pity that the Home Service could not have included in its programmes last week Mr. Stonier's delightful *Imaginary Conversation* on Strindberg's visit to London, *A Woman in the Zoo*, which had appeared in the Third earlier in the month. This was a scintillating little play, quite the liveliest of the present series of *Imaginary Conversations* that I have heard, and the funniest thing on the air for many months. Strindberg's encounter with the gorilla in the Regent's Park Zoo, a female gorilla at that, was a stroke of brilliant comic invention.

I cannot think that M. Sartre was well served by the Third Programme's production of *Crime Passionel*. My own feelings towards M. Sartre and Existentialism are, as they say, ambivalent: his novels seem to me pretentious, derivative and dull, but I do not remember ever having been more deeply moved by a modern play than I was by *Crime Passionel* at the Lyric, Hammersmith. The radio version, however, was the dimmest possible carbon copy of the original. Indeed, it had not even the merit of a carbon copy, however dim, because, for what reason I did not discover, the very form of the play had been altered in the adaptation and wrecked. The passion, the wit and the profundity of the play seemed wholly to escape adaptor and producer. It may be, of course, as I suspect, that *Crime Passionel* is totally unsuited to radio. In that case, much better leave it alone than put on last week's garbled version. WILLIAM SALTER

THE THEATRE

"The Cherry Orchard," at the New
"The Return of the Prodigal," at the Globe
"Miss Mabel," at the Duchess

A right and a wrong way to produce, a right use of a talented designer and a wrong. These are neatly contrasted in the week's two major productions, The Old Vic's *Cherry Orchard* and Mr. John Gielgud's Edwardian revival *The Return of the Prodigal*. Chekhov's plays, with their chequered pattern, their thread of detail, their rapid alternations between shine and shower, their shifts of emphasis and their small but vital climaxes, depend, more than many others, on the producer. Mr. Hugh Hunt, the producer at the Old Vic, is both imaginative and faithful; there is nothing tricky, nothing that stops to draw attention to him, about his version. He has a warm feeling for the text and he tries to give it its full value. Any producer is limited, of course, by the materials at his disposal, and Mr. Hugh Hunt has a repertory to deal with. Still, he has a good start. There are the excellent sets by Tanga Moiseiwitsch which, besides being decorative, fit in well with his scheme. He has, in Mr. Eddison, a most expressive and controlled Trofimov; in Mr. Mark Dignam a Lopahin who acts delightfully, though better with his body than his voice; then Sir Cedric Hardwicke's is a most authoritative performance, which persuades you, even a little against your will, that his polished version of Gaev is the right one. Above all, there is Dame Edith Evans. More than any other Madame Ranevsky I have seen does she bring with her the whole of the past of this feckless, emotionally self-indulgent and warm creature. But the rest of the repertory have to be fitted in as best they can. And this bears a little hardly on Chekhov whose small characters are so important in establishing the atmosphere. The open-air beginning of the second act, for instance, just failed to come off and, altogether, perhaps the nostalgic glow is a little wanting. All the same this is a perfectly creditable production; and it is a pleasure to be able to record that of the Old Vic once more.

Mr. Peter Glenville is the talented producer of *Crime Passionel* and Rattigan's *Playbill*. The problem which faces him in producing *The Return of the Prodigal* is quite different. He has a star-spangled caste and a weak play. Here is a leisurely Edwardian drama about a profligate son turning up after two years in Australia at the home where his elder brother and his father (a rich manufacturer) are both trying to cut a dash in the county. Far from being repentant the prodigal sees in this his chance, and blackmails his respectable relations to pay him off with a small allowance. For the producer, the difficulties about this piece, are first that the witty social conversations which abound fail to be funny. They are cast in the form of wit with sentences which begin "Disappointment is only bearable when . . . " or "The advantage of the lower orders is . . . . "; the walnut is held up to us between the silver nut-crackers and kernel after kernel turns out to be withered. A worse problem for the producer lies in the nature of the subject itself. The author means to win sympathy for rascality against the innate

respectability of the stalls, and it was this tepid inversion, presumably, which tickled in 1905. In 1948 it is obviously going to be hard to get this over. Still the only hope was to play the little drama, such as it is, for its full value and give the representatives of respectability the strongest possible case.

But, the producer has funked it and fallen back on a prevalent vulgarism. "1905? What *fun*!" So extra heaviness for the heavy father; extra pomposity for the pompous brother: extra fatuousness for the fatuous mother: and ("this always gets them") clothes and sets by Cecil Beaton.

Fatal! The emptiness of the wit becomes more obvious than ever; the family are so silly that the prodigal doesn't seem wicked: and the one scene of pathos that is left in is hopelessly at odds with the rest. The stars twinkle for all they're worth; Mr. Gielgud gives his best comedy performance. But the Hock is drowned in the Seltzer and the Seltzer is sadly flat.

Miss Mabel, Mr. R. C. Sherriff's story of a simple old lady who tried to do good with a bowl of toadstool soup, is a good little matinée play, well acted and wholly consistent on its own level. Just the thing for inexperienced country aunts and unsophisticated shopping cousins. T. C. WORSLEY

THE MOVIES

"Scott of the Antarctic," Royal Command Performance
"Red River," at the Plaza
"Call Northside 777," at the Marble Arch Odeon

We haven't, in films, the epic-making sense. Our sources are too far away. Imagine (no, the thought is ludicrously blighting) what any of our directors would make of Tristan and Iseul, Hereward the Wake, the Elizabethan adventurers; see what it *does* make, when it strikes out into legend, of a Bonny Prince Charlie. Radio in this respect has done far better than the screen; and when it comes to the modern epic of war or travel (Scott and Lawrence are its obvious heroes) again experience would drive home more through the ear. All the while I was watching *Scott of the Antarctic*—a beauty, by the way, for looks—I found myself thinking how much more passion and living conflict would have come from a radio-script with the same material, how the inner story would have caught the imagination and broken the ice. *Scott of the Antarctic*, despite its solid qualities, doesn't do that.

Perhaps Scott is still a little too near for broad, easy treatment as Hereward is too far. We know him, though not from this film, as a man of moods, a fêted public figure, a disciplinarian with his avenue of escape, a shy lover, a naval officer living over shops or in dingy rooms and having to beg funds for his expeditions. His devotion to his mother and to tradition (the two seem almost one) make a peculiarly English appeal: "For God's sake look after our people," his last written words, echo back from the tent in the snows ironically through life-long struggles to make good a wasted family fortune. In the film, since we have been told nothing of all this, the words only sound vaguely noble; Scott himself becomes vaguely likeable and restrained, and enduring; and this through no fault of Mr. John Mills, who carries the part admirably so far as the script-writers will give him one. The glimpses of home, of the voyage out, wintering at the base, etc., are on the same level: accurate enough, but timid.

We are left then with the reduced story of the last adventure, and with the Antarctic itself, accurately (it would appear) and beautifully re-created. The pleasure brought to the eye by these scenes is remarkable: the *Terra Nova* among dark seas and dazzling cliffs, the Great Barrier, shiny muscular glaciers and icicled caverns, crevasses, deep soft snows, the blank plateau, the storm-swept return. A restrained photography in Technicolor has made the most of these sights, though even here the full weight of terror and gloom is missing. But that is due probably to the film's general lack. I should like to emphasise that *Scott of the Antarctic*, directed by Charles Frend, is an ambitious, skilled and stirring piece which only falls short by a little of the high excitement it aims at. With English audiences the theme itself and its setting will carry it through.

Red River is yet another epic of the covered wagon days, and it lives on all the epics that have preceded it. But noisy, blatant imitation though the whole thing is, it does live. It isn't afraid of itself. So here we go, with some thousands of cattle, shooting off mouths and guns, branding the neighbour's steers, chiacking on the route, fording the river, breaking through the circle of Redskins, keeping the vigil, and overwhelmed by the stampede, to emerge at last among girls with all hatred and all sense abandoned. Mr. Montgomery Clift, a newcomer to films, helps to lend it a bold, incisive character.

The reverse of American legend-building is demonstrated by Henry Hathaway's *Call Northside 777*, a documentary exposé of the injustices that accompanied Chicago's reign of terror. Eleven years ago, a young Czech was wrongly arrested for the murder of a cop in a speakeasy and imprisoned for life. The case is revived by a story-seeking but sympathetic journalist (James Stewart), and through newspaper offices, police record rooms, prisons, stockyards, bars, and alleys we track down the flaw in the evidence that will bring release. "This is a true story," the film begins; and it convinces us, thrillingly and at every moment, of its claim. The people, like the facts, speak for themselves; in direction, photography, and acting *Call Northside 777* could hardly be improved on. The quality of movement and sound may be judged by the fact that this film has made its impress *without music*. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

BALLET

Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

Mr. Frederick Ashton's *Don Juan* follows the same severe, clear-cut pattern of movement which he introduced with *Symphonic Variations*. It is as though all slurred and superfluous action had been cleared away, showing in these latter works the white, wind-sweetened bones of pure dancing. This new ballet is an abstraction of the Don Juan story, which is usually treated as the epitome of erotic romanticism. But here the mistresses, in ghost grey and blue tu-tus, are led by "la Morte Amoureuse" and are formalised spirits of love, drained of passion, their only link with life being their inability to escape the power of an ideal lover. As the ultimate ideal—Death—Miss Margot Fonteyn gives a performance which puts her above every other artist in the company. She seems to have grown beyond conscious effort, for movements of the most complex and violent kinds flow from her limbs as easily as running water; she eddies and twists and tumbles irresistibly carried along by the force of the music, yet still reserving that last ounce of strength, which only the finished artist may control. Her *pas de deux* with Mr. Robert Helpmann (Don Juan) is exquisite in invention and execution, the choreography having here a quality of surprise that is consonant with Richard Strauss's music. This surprise quality is one which Mr. Ashton has now learnt to employ without letting an over-emphasis turn the effect into a stunt.

But in spite of possessing great individual fascination, the music, decor and dancing do not make an integrated whole. The form of the slight story is not satisfactory and I am somewhat bored with *chi-chi* ruins in ballet decor, even though Mr. Burra's broken arches are good value as masonry. Besides, the company as a whole lack verve and spontaneity. This is particularly noticeable in the two other ballets shown—*Les Patineurs* and *La Boutique Fantasque*—both of which require lithe and stimulating personalities to bring them off. It seems as though, by continuous application to the technique of the body, the individualities of the dancers have worn thin. Unfortunately no one has yet been found to teach them the proper expression of their idiosyncracies, which remain at a stage of self-conscious immaturity. ANNABEL FARJEON

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Correspondence

FRUIT IMPORTS

SIR,—I went through Covent Garden one morning lately and discovered that the home-grown fruit season had ended, and that the British public will need to wait until the autumn of next year before it obtains any further supplies of pears, plums or apples.

Two months ago I visited a demonstration of orchard and market-garden equipment arranged by the National Agricultural Advisory Service in South Hampshire. It was a magnificent display, but it lacked one thing—an audience of interested farmers.

A month ago I saw a fine new grading centre costing £30,000 opened at Kirdford, Sussex, and heard the chairman of the packing co-operative describe it as a waste of capital, although it had the keen approval of the N.A.A.S.

There is one explanation that covers all three phenomena—the import and price-control policy of the Ministry of Food. For some time one could afford to lean back and marvel at the extent of official stupidity, reflecting that the whole stunt was inherited from Lord Woolton, and the Labour Government would tidy up the mess. It rather appears now as if the mess will tidy up the Labour Government, at least in horticulture. If something is not done about the M.O.F., Labour candidates in rural constituencies are due for a nasty shock at the next election.

Let me give the record as briefly as I can.

Potatoes. The story of potatoes is not pretty, from the masses of early potatoes extracted from the starving populations of Italy, Spain and the Canary Islands to the hundreds of thousands of tons of English potatoes lying undug in the fields. In a glut year, we have potatoes from Poland, Denmark, Holland and (I believe) even Australia, to ruin a market so bedevilled by Ministry of Food regulations that a magnificent crop may as well be written off now. Few farmers in Hampshire have been able to sell potatoes since August and are so little hopeful of doing so that only the guarantee by the M.O.F. to take them off their hands on November 1st allowed them to harvest them.

Vegetables. The current quotation for high grade cauliflower is 1d. to 2d. each to the growers but the public never pays less than 1/- to 1/6. It is at this very moment of maximum production that the M.O.F. permits an enormous importation from France, Holland and Belgium. Similar developments have occurred in practically every other vegetable, with the result that growers' prices have been lower than anything recorded in this century.

Fruit. It is in fruit that the most incredible mistakes have occurred; but here the M.O.F. showed its hand rather too clearly. In pre-war years we imported about 300,000 tons of apples, mainly from Canada, U.S.A., and Australasia, to make up deficiency in the British crop; and the system worked quite well. Now the M.O.F. decided to alter all that—why bother about nine months' spread of imports, why not pile the entire collection on the top of the English crop? It would be so much neater to have 20 ships unloading 80,000 tons from Australasia in one week than spread the load. The public buy most apples in August, September and October. Why not dump them on the consumer then? This is exactly what the M.O.F. did.

The Australian apples had been picked three months before the Ministry threw them at the miserable retailer. I saw a truck dumping 100 bushels of apples at one retailer who normally does not sell that amount in three months. "What can I do?" he said to me in despair. "If I refuse them, I lose my allocation of oranges, grapefruit etc., and yet I cannot possibly sell them." He did his best, turning down all his English suppliers to make it easier, but he didn't succeed. He is still, in November, trying to sell dessicated Sturmers he received in August.

The M.O.F. incurred storage charges at the docks in Australia and here, and, to meet them, imposed an extra charge of 1½d. per lb. so that Australian apples were retailed at 9½d. and English at 8d., the consumer paying the extra tax on inferior, over-ripe material. Something like £6,000,000 were thrown away, enough to double the butter or petrol ration, and our debt to Australia, already sufficiently heavy, correspondingly increased.

But that was not all, and now the story is unpleasant, the record of a particularly dirty action. In 1947, the N.A.A.S. developed a plan for grouping and packing high-grade apples without control, and persuaded the growers to embark on very heavy capital expenditure on new packing centres (I have instanced £30,000 in Sussex alone). In 1948 the M.O.F. stated that control would be removed as soon as conditions permitted and urged growers to get on with their packing arrangements. On September 9th and October 28th it refused to remove price control and destroyed completely the plans and policies of the N.A.A.S.

Now for price controls. Up to November 1st the control price for high-class dessert apples of the Cox type was 74/8 per cwt. This compares with 93/1 in 1940, a reduction of 20 per cent in eight years in a period when wages have risen over 100 per cent and other costs 150 per cent. All other apples, including the fine new varieties recommended by the Ministry of Agriculture for future expansion, scabby cookers and windfall cider apples, were fixed at 4½d. per lb. to the grower, exactly what it costs to produce them in the orchard with no allowance for wages, taxation or interest on capital. The Ministry of Food is quite simply determined to make nonsense of the N.A.A.S. In pears, the same story of the Civil Service doublecross obtains.

What finally is the result of this folly? The British public is still paying colossal sums for its vegetables while the grower is penniless; it has not had and will not have a decent apple or pear in 1948 or 1949 because fruit-growers can no longer afford the £100 an acre it requires to produce a perfect sample and must economise to the limit; it will continue to receive expensive rubbish from overseas, including supplies from starving Europe which should have gone to feed the native populations.

That, in short, is the record of the M.O.F. It shouts for investigation. We are in the middle of an agricultural slump, the extent of which is only becoming apparent to manufacturers of equipment in the Midlands and North. All previous slumps began with agriculture, as this one is beginning. If something very drastic is not done, and at once, with the Ministry of Food, the policy of full employment will suffer shipwreck.

HUGH QUIGLEY

Melchet Park Farm, Sherfield English, Hants.

[We have submitted this indictment to the Ministry of Food, whose Director of Public Relations, Mr. Shelton Smith, replies as follows:

Mr. Hugh Quigley's letter is, frankly, a farrago of nonsense and misstatements of fact from start to finish. For example:

Potatoes. He writes: "In a glut year, we have potatoes from Poland, Denmark, Holland and (I believe) even Australia, to ruin a market . . ." Not a ton of potatoes, new or old, has been imported from Poland, Denmark, Holland, or "even Australia" or from anywhere else during this present glut potato year. What Mr. Quigley has apparently just heard of is that we imported potatoes last year when, following the disastrous crop of 1947, the position became so serious that for the first time in our history we had to introduce a rationing scheme for potatoes. We certainly had to import potatoes then—and as many as we could get. This year, he writes, "a magnificent crop may as well be written off." In fact, the farmer has a guaranteed market this year, as before, for all the potatoes he has. Under this guarantee, which runs from the 1st November, the Ministry undertakes, subject to quite simple conditions, to purchase all the potatoes offered to it by a farmer. The price now averages about £8 a ton, which is the normal price for the sale of ware potatoes for human consumption, and owing to the heavy crop this year the Ministry has to sell many thousands of tons a

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week for stock-feeding at a price of only £4 or less. The farmer is thus completely protected and heavily subsidised by the taxpayer. He really ought not to grumble—and, in truth, I don't think he does. Nor is it true that he could not sell his early potatoes. Wherever there was difficulty, the Ministry of Food came in and bought them also in order to sustain the market.

Cauliflower. Mr. Quigley says: "It is at this very moment of maximum production that the M.o.F. permits an enormous importation from France, Holland and Belgium." The fact is that "at the very moment" at which Mr. Quigley was writing his letter to you, no imports of cauliflower whatever had been received; and up to as recently as three or four days ago only 25 tons had been imported. What is true is that cauliflowers are now 1d a pound cheaper to the consumer than under the old controlled price. The Ministry of Food is extremely glad that this is so.

Fruit. The fact is that from the beginning of December to early August there was not this year, and there never has been, enough home-grown eating apples to supply the demand. Far from this being because we have imported too many apples, it is because we have been able to import too few. This year we were not able to afford the dollars to buy any apples from the United States and Canada, from whom in pre-war years we would get over 200,000 tons. Happily we were able to buy some apples from Australia and New Zealand, but unhappily very much less than 200,000 tons. The contracts were, in fact, for some 80,000 tons of eating apples to arrive during May and June, 1948, and more than three-quarters of this quantity had been delivered and eaten before the marketing of the home apple crop had even begun.

It is quite untrue to assert that apples were "lying at the docks three months," or that storage charges at the docks in Australia were incurred by the Ministry. All this part of Mr. Quigley's letter is pure invention.

Finally, a comment on what Mr. Quigley describes as the "record of a particularly dirty action" in refusing to lift the price control on apples. We should have described this action as the Ministry's refusal to allow the price of apples to sky-rocket. The Ministry announced its intention of decontrolling prices for a period *as soon as the volume of supplies coming on the market justified it.* But the necessary volume of supplies did not appear. The supplies marketed in the first three months of the season were one-third less than the quantity imported in the same period in 1947. To have removed price control in such circumstances would have resulted in very high prices indeed.

Most of the other assertions in Mr. Quigley's letter are of the same standard of accuracy as the ones with which I have dealt. What a pity he did not take the trouble to learn even the elementary facts of the situation before filling some of your valuable space."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

LABOUR PARTY'S DILEMMA

SIR,—Mr. Zilliacus tells us once more that "the workers of Europe" are Communists, and that to stand for democratic Socialism on the Continent "means coming down on the side of the capitalists against the workers." I destroyed this fairy tale. Mr. Zilliacus is not able to challenge the veracity of my facts. I asked him whether he advocates surrender of the Berlin and Viennese Socialist workers. No reply. I asked him whether the British workers should, in his opinion, bow to the Moscow or to the Belgrade pattern of Communism. No reply, although Mr. Zilliacus visited Tito quite recently. (Did he try to reconcile Tito with Stalin or did he try to win him—*horrible dictu*—for democratic Socialism?) I compared his political line to a recommendation to a canary to enter into "friendly collaboration" with a cat. Again no reply.

Yet your readers are told that I only confirmed what Mr. Zilliacus had written! Mr. Zilliacus wrote: "In France, Italy and elsewhere (!) they (the workers) have chosen," namely "to go forward under Communist leadership." I answered: "the workers" in France and Italy have not chosen anything. (The interesting country "elsewhere" has meanwhile been shelved for the next opportunity when I am supposed not to be on my guard.) But as my political passions do not induce me to gloss over facts which I do not like, I did not deny that there *are* Communists among the French and Italian workers. The facts and figures submitted by Mr. Zilliacus on this point are, however, either wrong or irrelevant.

First, Italy. The statement that the Executive Committee of the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro* has so and so many Communist members, does not say anything and allows no conclusion on the political composition of the rank and file membership. (Or does the fact that one of the members of the T.U.C. General Council is a Communist enable anyone to figure out the numerical strength of the Communists in the British trade unions?) It is simply not true that the Saragat-Socialists (Lombardo does not belong to this party) are a "small, Right-wing, middle-class breakaway from the Italian Socialist Party" and it is even less true that they are "embedded in the ruling capitalist coalition." Fighting against heavy odds and backed by Transport House (unfortunately only at the last moment) Saragat stood with remarkable success on an independent ticket as a democratic Socialist. To classify men like Saragat and Lombardo as a "sort of MacDonaldite or National Commonwealth Party" means an insult to these upright working-class leaders which could only have been expressed because both are little known over here.

The true development in France is well known by now. No Socialist likes the "crying social evils in which post-war France is floundering." The French Socialists do their best to eradicate them. The French Communists do their utmost to sabotage the endeavours of the former and so pave the way for de Gaulle. To blame the French Socialists for the declining standard of living means to blame the fire brigade for the fire. "Practically all the workers in the basic heavy industry unions" are Communists? According to a report in *Force Ouvrière* (November 4) only 56 per cent of the French workers voted in favour of the last strike; 44 per cent abstained from voting upon recommendation of the *Force Ouvrière* organisation.

I think I have disposed of all attempts by Mr. Zilliacus to sidetrack the issue. What is all the controversy about? Recently a Czech Social Democrat who issued an "illegal" paper called *Social Democrat* was condemned in Prague to 18 years' penal servitude. The real issue at stake is where Mr. Zilliacus's sympathies in this case are; whether he sides with the cruel oppressors of this Social Democrat or with this martyr of democratic Socialism, the same Socialism which Mr. Zilliacus has been elected to promote and to defend?

J. W. BRUEGEL

65 Beaufort Park,
London, N.W.11.

DEFECTIVE CHILDREN

SIR,—The article of Mr. Romilly and the letter of Dr. Leys raise questions, beyond the particular case, of great importance which demand urgent attention. In recent years I have had experience of two cases of mentally deficient children, and I can only conclude from that experience that our methods of providing for the care of such children are lamentably deficient. In both cases the parents were friends of mine and I was asked for advice. In one the parents were very well-off middle-class people, in the other they were working-class.

For reasons of space, I will deal here only with the second case. Mr. Romilly assumes that if the child can be sent to a large public institution, all will be well. The following facts do not support this view. In this case the child was the youngest son of a family of five. He was completely imbecile and required constant attention. As is so often the case, the mother was more devoted to him than to any of her children and literally devoted her life to him. The other children, when grown up, tried, always unsuccessfully, to persuade her to send him to some home or institution. At the age of ten the difficulties of dealing with him in a cottage increased

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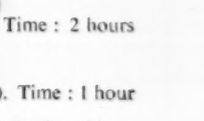

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and they asked me to discuss the matter with the mother. I did so and persuaded her to allow me to make inquiries about somewhere to send him. I found that every institution had so long a waiting list that it was impossible to get him in, and, by the time that there was some prospect of doing so, she had changed her mind and refused to part from him.

About three years later I was again asked by the elder children, who were worried about their mother's health, to talk the matter over with her. With her consent I went to the Medical Officer of Health, who behaved with the greatest kindness and sympathy, and, largely owing to him, the boy was received in a large institution. Two weeks later he was seriously ill and three weeks later he was dead. I saw the child a day or two before he went to the institution and two days before he died; I visited the institution itself; and I made careful inquiries into the facts. All the authorities concerned, from the Medical Officer to the nurses seemed to me to have done everything possible; they behaved with kindness to the child and with sympathy and forbearance—for the situation was extremely difficult and painful—to the parents. But I have no doubt whatsoever that the child died because the conditions in the institution made it impossible to give a child of that mentality adequate attention. It was no one's fault; there were too many children of too many different degrees of mental deficiency in the same room for any nurse to give the care and constant supervision required.

That is the only public institution of which I have knowledge; I have no personal experience of the care of mentally defective children. But I am quite certain that the organisation of that particular institution was totally unfit for dealing humanely with the child actually received into it. It was no fault of the staff, whose behaviour, as I said, was admirable. The organisation and physical conditions made proper care impossible.

For obvious reasons I cannot sign my name.

OBSERVER

EUROPE-AMERIQUE

SIR,—Mr. Werth's indignation at the publication of "*La Vie Intime de Staline*" can only be matched by our astonishment at the allegations he makes in his letter published in your November 20 issue.

Mr. Werth would have done better by consulting first the arrangements he concluded with the press agencies which are distributing his much-praised work the world over.

Suppose indeed that "*La Vie Intime de Staline*," instead of being a "concoction" of "tripy anti-Soviet propaganda" was a regular "exclusivity," the rights of which are being sold on the Continent by an international press agency. How could Mr. Werth deliberately accuse a newspaper which bought these rights, of committing a "forgery"?

Well, Mr. Werth did accuse *Europe-Amérique* of "fraudulent practices" without bothering of having all the facts collected. A little investigation would have proved him that the incriminated articles were distributed in Belgium by the "International News Alliance," from which *Europe-Amérique* bought the rights of publication in Belgium.

This letter constitutes a *mise au point;* we require you to publish it in your next issue, hoping it will repair the damage caused to us by Mr. Werth's ill-tempered manners.

A final word: it is easy for your correspondent to write contemptuously about "horror stories about Russia," but does Mr. Werth really believe and do your readers share the conviction that Stalin's life was nothing than an idyllic episode, an epoch of happiness for the Russian people? Will Mr. Werth rewrite in rosy terms the history of the first 20 years of the Bolshevik regime? MANAGING DIRECTOR

19 Grand Place, Brussels. *Europe-Amérique*

[We are glad to publish the above letter from *Europe-Amérique*, noting its statement that the articles of which Mr. Werth complained were sent to it by an agency and that it published them in good faith. We must point out, however, that Mr. Werth's letter did not accuse *Europe-Amérique* of "fraudulent practices," but stated that the articles were forgeries and that his protest was intended to discourage such "fraudulent practices."—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

GREEK JUSTICE

SIR,—The continued refusal of the Government to intervene in any way to prevent the execution of the ten trade unionists recently sentenced to death by a court-martial in Athens seems peculiarly indefensible in the light of previous interventions.

The parliamentary answer given on November 22, that the "Government refrain from intervening in foreign trials except where British interests or their treaty obligations are involved" covered a case where the Foreign Office had intervened with great vigour in the court-martial of various Ministers in 1922. Mr. Mayhew gave no explanation how British interests were there involved, unless they somehow came in because the Ministers were charged with incompetence. But further research brings to light a number of further examples:—

On March 5, 1947, in the case of a boy of 16 validly sentenced to death under the law of Greece, Mr. Mayhew said that, as the case was under review, no representations by our Ambassador were called for *at that stage;* "on the other hand," he added, "there may be a case for reconsidering the decision later."

Again, on May 10, 1948, after equally "legal" mass executions, Mr. McNeil stated that, while the Ambassador "has no status to interfere in Greek judicial procedure," Mr. Bevin had instructed the Ambassador to "represent in the plainest possible language . . . that any executions in Greece in the nature of reprisals or of mass executions would create an immediate and deplorable reaction not only in this country but on civilised opinion."

I wonder how the Government would distinguish these two cases; and I wonder if it realises how shocked wide circles of the movement, by no means all on the Left, are by this ostentatious refusal to utter even a syllable.

I should add that, if British Government protest against mass arrests and deportations, and long detentions without trial, fall within the description of judicial proceedings, I could make my examples two or three times as numerous. D. N. PRITT

INQUEST ON AN ALLY

SIR,—If my attitude to the Russian problem were as confused as your review of *Inquest on an Ally* suggests, it would need urgent revision.

When I wrote in 1944 that people who urged closer relationship between Britain and Russia were not crying for the moon, I was not forgetting the philosophy of the Politburo. I was hopeful—more—that the bark of theory might prove to have been worse than the bite of practice; that in view of war-time association and the evident desire of Britain and America for continued co-operation with Russia, practical common sense might triumph over the textbooks. It was a slender, but not discreditable, hope. Unhappily, it proved to be without foundation. The bite turned out to be worse than the bark. With the greatest regret, I was forced to conclude that the possibility of agreement with the Soviet Government must be excluded. *Inquest* marshals the facts on which that conclusion was based.

This does *not* mean, however, that I am logically committed to the advocacy of an immediate war. The book makes it clear that I believe there is another course—the weakening and ultimate destruction of Soviet Communism without war. The "weapons of peace" are surely not to be despised. I agree that the theme needs elaboration, but that was not the main purpose of the book.

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Christmas Books

THE FREE RUN OF THE SHELVES

In our home, which, looking back, I see as passionate and ecstatic like a wilderness of monkeys, pleasure and pain being, both by parents and children, very sharply felt as ecstasy and anguish—in our home, which was a largish, self-sufficing, and somewhat neurotic community herded together on a Mediterranean shore, bibliomania obtained and bibliomachy intermittently raged. Our parents were great readers; our library seemed to us large; we had the free run of it. We used to hide books under chair-cushions and in dark corners, as dogs hide bones, lest someone else should steal them. Sometimes, like selfish clubmen, we would sit on several books that we felt we might presently require. Of popular new books, just sent us from England, we were made to take turns. One brother stood rather outside the bibliomane fold. "*Do* stop reading," he would plead; and would seize our books and hide them; once he snatched my Shelley from me and threw it over a wall into the orto; it fell into the well, and had to be fished for with the contadino's bucket.

The most extreme rapture of reading was private; it could not be shared (except when our parents read aloud); one slipped into a dream world, a secret cave world; one hid under tables and sofas, in the tops of orange trees, in the ivy humps on high walls, to be beyond reach. Each book read was a new world explored, a new country opened, a new set of beings gloriously enlarged into one's territory. I believe the first such invaders (introduced by reading aloud, before we could read to ourselves) were Masterman Ready and the Seagrave family; hard on their heels came the Little Duke, Ivanhoe and the wicked Templar whom we knew as Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Sir Kenneth from *The Talisman*, and an army of dashing Greeks—Jason, with centaur and the ship Argo, Perseus, with dragon, Gorgon, cap of darkness and winged heels, Theseus with minotaur and maze, Odysseus with his many wiles. Very soon after that arrived Henry and Jack, Ralph and Peterkin from the *Coral Island;* knights, pages and squires from *The Prince and the Page* and King Arthur's Round Table; a glittering galaxy of heroes, villians and adventurers who set one's life marching and swaggering as if to trumpets and drums. The romantic life: inside the external round of lessons, meals, walks, that is what we led; piracy, desert islands (we had *L'Isola del Tesoro* in Italian), swashbuckling, polar exploration (ex Jules Verne), buccaneering, jungling with Mowgli's wolf-pack, detecting with Holmes, battling on land and sea—there was no dull moment. Henry James and Stevenson told one another with smug masculine obtuseness that girls do not play at pirates; neither had daughters; as to Alice Holmes, the only sister they had between them, probably neither she nor Henry was ever a child.

Into this bold life of action there entered early (I think I was eight) a new hero, Sir Guy Morville from *The Heir of Redclyffe*. It is impossible, probably, for a later and less hero-worshipping generation to imagine the impassioned devotion that I and the sister a year above me endured at the feet of this young baronet, with his Morville temper, his flashing hazel eye, his lip bitten in rage till it bled, his noble self-conquests. I cannot even now recall Guy, or type his name, without emotion; and for a year or two I would creep under the sofa and hide if Guy was mentioned. We had a jovial uncle who came to stay; he discovered our passion, and would profane it by remarking when we misbehaved, "I don't think Guy would approve of that." Out of devotion to our hasty-tempered hero, I, and I expect my sister, tried to induce our eyes to flash, our lips to curl in anger, and won spectacular victories over the Morville temper by suddenly stopping and folding our arms when in angry pursuit of a foe. It was our mother who first read us *The Heir of Redclyffe*; she had been herself its enthusiastic addict from childhood, and her enthusiasms were infectious, at least to the girls of the family; the boys were tougher and more immune. With me, Guy never had a rival, except Ivanhoe, Hugo Wharncliffe, Sidney Carton and Rudolf Rassandyll, and these were only also rans.

Every evening, from the time we were old enough to listen, my father read aloud to me. If by some mischance he missed a reading, he was nearly as vexed as my mother was when she was defeated at cards (I have mentioned that we were an eccentric family; perhaps all families are). He read us nearly all Dickens and Scott, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Lorna Doone*, Shakespeare, a lot of poetry, Jane Austen, Meredith (these two not before our teens), *Tom Jones* (but later we discovered that he had left out the more vulgar bits), *The Three Musketeers*; we knew at the time that he left out the more vulgar bits of this, because it was the only book we were forbidden to read to ourselves, and some of the pages were stuck together with sticking paper; my mother thought the coarseness of the bedroom scenes might displease us. I don't think actually we should have been more than bored; children, anyhow in our innocent and sheltered income-group, attach no meaning to companionship in bedrooms. The only two books that my father read us that I remember being bored by were *Don Quixote* and *The Origin of Species*, which was rather heavy going for us; I used to sit in the dark corner behind his chair and read a book of my own. I don't think he can have persevered with this great work to the end. Had we been more bold and resourceful than we were, I suppose we should have hidden it, thrown it into the well, or taken it out in the canoe and dropped it into the sea, as my younger brother once did with a book of mine that he thought absorbed too much of my attention. But my father's choices were, as a rule, unerring; we hung round him fascinated while, on hill walks, he related to us stories from Herodotus, the Odyssey, or the Inferno. The infernal circles did not alarm us at all, though many books did. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* were perused by my eldest sister (I think she was ten) with such effects on her nerves that we were all forbidden access to them. Futile precaution: my sister would regale us at nursery tea with the blood-curdling tale of the razor-armed orang-outang coming down the chimney, and this ape for long made havoc of our nights. So, a little later, did the maniac in *Jane Eyre*, which I read too early, at the age of nine.

Poetry flowed into life with surges of exquisite excitement. Tennyson, Shelley, Browning, Swinburne—this, I think, was the chronological order of our early poets. I was given a complete Tennnyson when I was eight, and a complete Shelley (illustrated) next year. The *Lotus Eaters* and the *Revenge* formed a glorious medley in my mind with the Shelley lyrics and *Prometheus Unbound* (alarming picture in my book of Prometheus chained to his rock, with approaching eagle). Shelley is an intoxicant; I suppose it was round about my tenth birthday that I used to wade along the sea's edge chanting, in an orgy of self-pity,

> O world! O life! O time! on whose last steps
> I climb,
> Trembling at that where I had stood before,
> When will return the glory of your prime?
> No more, O never more!

or

> A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
> One too like thee, tameless and swift and proud.

or

> I met murder on the way,
> He had a mask like Castlereagh.
> Very smooth he looked, yet grim;
> Seven bloodhounds followed him.
> All were fat, and well they might
> Be in admirable plight,
> For one by one and two by two
> He tossed them human hearts to chew.

For poetry, one had to be alone. I used to take it out to sea in the canoe, and shout to the horizon Sir Richard Grenville's defiance to the great San Philip, and the forsaken merman's lament:

> Where great whales come sailing by,
> Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
> Round the world for ever and aye . . . .

Romance-drugged and infatuate beings, I suppose we were ill-trained for life, fed on fancy, bred in the heart and in the head, taught grandioseness young. Our childhood was pre-film; since then there have grown up generations largely nourished on celluloid dreams. I doubt if such dreams are as exciting; they are probably just about as unbalanced and as remote from the life we have to live. Perhaps, after all, for such a life, windy visions and self-dramatising struttings are not a bad start: from the dusty highway one looks back on islands more purple than any technicolour.

ROSE MACAULAY

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The Jays of St. John's. By JUDITH CARR. *Blackie.* 5s. 6d.

Each year the activities of school girls in school girl stories seem to have one predominating theme. One year the thrilling pages will be almost entirely devoted to boating accidents:

> Maud Tennyson gave a little cry and, forgetting even to hold her nose, plunged desperately into the heavy swell. "I'm coming, youngster," she yelled and struck out gamely to where the chestnut head of Cora Tilling bobbed on the foaming surface. Her powerful crawl ate up the yards that separated them, and though her blouse and things were sopping, Maud never gave them a thought.

Another year the girls will be violently occupied with competitive events on playing field and concert platform:

> "Edna must win, she *must*," breathed Brenda, deftly loosening the strings on Mona Henderson's 'cello. Then, white and tense, she raised her plimsoled foot and plunged it, with a vicious jab, into the main bulk of Mona's beloved instrument. It was clear that the Mussorgsky *Caprice* would now prove a total fiasco.

Sometimes the emphasis is actually on work, with Hilda going all out for that Biology Scholarship. These episodes always include an illness on the eve of the exam. ("Matron's face was grim, as, adjusting her pince-nez, she eyed the telltale thermometer"), a bunch of roses brought by a devoted friend ("Joyce, careless of thorns, buried her flushed face in the fragrant full-blown Mrs. Percy Bolsters"), and a final triumph:

> The others had laid down their pens but Thirza still wrote on, her golden Easiflow (a gift from Dad) devouring the snowy sheets. "Two minutes more," boomed Miss Pratt, and Thirza, with a start of dismay, realised that the stamen question was still untouched.

This year the main theme of the stories is just plain naughtiness. In *High School*, by Martha Robinson, there is a tempestuous girl called Molly. She kicks Judy Miller during prayers, takes Judy's pencil, makes an ink mark on Judy's prep., pulls Judy's hair ("Judy gasped with pain"), and then sneaks ("Oooooo!") to Miss Taylor. Judy, trying to stop Molly blabbing, claps a hand over her mouth and is promptly bitten ("These are teeth marks," diagnoses Miss Pritchard). Then Molly pulls off Judy's shoe and belabours her on the head (Judy seeing "nothing but a mist"). This is unsettling, and when Judy goes to music with Miss Satterthwaite ("someone very special"), her nerves are in shreds:

> She started off her Beethoven exercise with a dash but almost at once she was pulled up for her fingering. From then on she went to bits.

Miss Satterthwaite, who has sent her a Christmas card, is furious, and Judy does badly before the examiner ("he's hot on fingering"), following Miranda Gray, "a big girl of sixteen with black greasy hair growing low on her forehead," and then hiding in the lavatory.

Molly, after tipping people off the bench during singing practice, makes a scene during washing-up:

> "I'm wiping the pudding plates," said Judy, furiously. "Please leave go." Molly's white face went whiter and her eyes narrowed. "Keep your red hair on," she sneered.

Molly pulls Judy's tea-cloth, reels back, trips up, rushes at Barbara Marston and gives her a savage bite ("everyone could tell she was hurt"). Then Julia "pinched Molly's nose, holding on with some difficulty, for Molly's face was buried in the upper part of Barbara's arm." Miss Pritchard is mistress of the situation:

> "Julia, get a chair and . . . give Barbara a drink. Enid, see if there is a kettle boiling . . . Ah, Matron —just look at that wound for me, please."

When, in *Stepsisters for Lorna*, by Elinor Brent-Dyer, Lorna hears of her mother's re-marriage, she "leaned against the headmistress, her eyes closed, her head whirling." Her step-sisters arrive, and the younger one, Marigold, is "a real beauty, despite her plumpness," although "her mouth was full and pouting and her chin heavy." Marigold refers to her stepmother as "Mater" (Lorna is "as mad as hops about it all"), throws her biscuit wrappings about and behaves badly at the day-school meals. Then she tries to read Lorna's letter, falls over a chair and lies on the floor "thrashing about with arms and legs and shrieking like a maniac." Her sister tries to stop her, but Marigold "snapped her teeth together," and Rosemary is bitten and bathed with Dettol, while Lorna's aunt souses Marigold with water. Then Marigold bicycles downhill (forbidden), comes a purler ("it hurts to sit down") and is "anointed with a special lotion." Despite sitting on an "air-ring" she has to "spend a few months lying flat" in the Cottage Hospital. There, fed on tempting food in "beblossomed china dishes," Marigold recovers, bursts into tears ("heartrending to witness"), gets down on Christmas Day, kisses Lorna, is allowed to call Lorna's aunt "Auntie Kath," and receives some ivory beads, a "game," a "dainty brooch," hair-ribbons and a guitar. She "had made her first steps along the road to reformation. It was going to be a long hard pull for her, and many would be her slips and stumbles."

The story also concerns girls called Gwynneth Plummer, Sally Wesley and Caroline Heavisides, and a mistress, Miss Nash, gets so engrossed in quadratics ("her blood was up") that the Lower Fourth is late for its milk and biscuits. This causes considerable comment, and Caroline Heavisides declines a tea invitation from Margery in order to have an extra "slog" with her pater in his "den."

In *Peter—New Girl*, by Phyllis Matthewman, the naughtiness is more subtle, and centres round an animated girl called Tessa Wentworth with "ripe corn-colour hair" who can be "simply horrid." She is sarcastic, given to saying "dear me," and, having been to Australia and played deck games, is inclined to be sophisticated. She is also suspected of having "mucked up Rachel's . . . model of a horse," which was "absolutely super," and dished Rachel for the Art Prize (Art Mistress: Miss Mann). Peter (Petronella) Chalmers takes to Tessa, runs away (Isle of Wight to Hereford) because her dog ("wise brown eyes") is ill. She is brought back in time for a row with Tessa and a friendship with an American girl who is "like a china figure, somehow." Then Peter descends the cliff face to rescue her dog, slips (On to a ledge? Yes, indeed), breaks her collar bone, is joined by Tessa, rescued (not a moment too soon: "it's going to rain again, I'm sure it is"), and reconciled: "we've both been thinking beastly things about each other, and it was Doreen all the time." Tessa's form loses the Form Cup, Marian being discovered dressing up the Venus de Milo statue ("In a dead silence Miss Webster advanced up the room"), and there are some jolly Sixth Formers: "the ginger one is Jane Grey—yes, really, isn't it queer?".

In *Rachel Changes Schools*, by Nancy Breary, Rachel Mitford leaves her Orphan School (navy tunics, scarlet blouses and spindly black legs) and goes to Featherstone Hall (brown suits, ice-blue silk blouses and the *Tatler* in the prefects' room). The girls number a Peer, a Bishop and a Brigadier-General among their relations, and Anthea Bellingham, captain of the Upper Fourth, begins a sentence with "I really feel with *absolute* conviction. . . ." Anthea has seen life: "When my Auntie Biddie was married she had six bridesmaids, and all our photographs were in *Tatler*." She has another aunt who is "going to have the best kind of wedding at St. George's, Hanover Square," and Anthea refers to Matron as "a particularly foul woman . . . all the poor creature's methods are more or less obsolete." Rachel rashly invents some suitable relatives but does not bluff these knowing girls. However, her famous novelist sponsor arrives ("... goodness knows what she paid for her sables . . . her suit shouted Paris from every seam") and little matters like Rachel retorting "fish and find out" to awkward questions are forgotten. It is hardly surprising that the motion selected for the Seniors' Debate is "That free education for all will eventually ruin civilisation as we know it."

The Jays of St. John's, by Judith Carr, concerns Va, who have had some set-backs ("Joy's sick turn, Jennifer's sprained thumb, Miss Latimer's tonsilitis"), and their new member, Valerie North, goes to her mother's tennis dance ("it was so tempting, I just stayed") and gets into hot water: "You just about deserve to be expelled." There is trouble over the forbidden reading of novels, one of the Sixth having brought back *Toujours Véronique* ("taboo") and Miss Latimer getting very fussed over Daphne du Maurier: "So! *Rebecca!* I rather suspected this." Some of the confiscated books are handed back after "one shilling penalty to the library fund." Miss Latimer ("Latty") is keen on quotations ("... a valuable asset, besides being interesting"), boxes June's ears with a book, apologises ("Sorry I took it out on you, June"), and slumps forward on to her desk ("Oh, Miss Latimer!") most excitingly during Geography. Diphtheria is suspected but Valerie need not worry: "You have already had it, my dear, years and years ago in Hong Kong." A young and jolly mistress, Miss Browne ("... by the way, do call me Barbara"), replaces Miss Latimer, and at any moment there may be a thrill such as "Say, girls, have any of you heard the latest? Measles in Form I."

I suspect that the school girl readers of these stories will be a trifle bored with the naughtiness. Anybody can be naughty. What they prefer is the unexpected, the dramatic, the recklessly daring:

> How the gravel crunched! Hilary tip-toed gingerly towards Miss Claxton's giant roadster, swung herself into the generously upholstered driving-seat, pressed the self-starter and the powerful machine purred smoothly out on to the Hastings road. Would Miss Plantain spot the dummy in her cubicle? Why had Miss Cox blanched at the mention of Brighton? Where were Rhoda and Dolores? She puckered her brows as the night breeze tore through her tousled mop and the speedometer soared and soared and then hung steadily at 34 m.p.h.

ARTHUR MARSHALL

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Prince of Darkness. By J. F. POWERS. *John Lehmann.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

English Story. Eighth Series. Ed. WOODROW WYATT. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

There are times when a sense of injustice comes near to halting the reviewer's pen, and only a sad professionalism drives it forward. Should we not at least be forced to inscribe our *mood* in brackets after the signature, for in none of us is there that stability of judgment which the unqualified signature appears to claim. Light-hearted, we give all possible credit to deftness, to ingenuity, even, in the short-story, to the meretricious pleasures of simple surprise. Thoughtful, we welcome an issue, a human problem, a topic to revolve laboriously in the mind. At other times, and these are surely the best moments of our judgment, although they are the harshest, nothing will do but some flicker of real illumination, some piercing, even if only for an instant, only by a pinprick, of the intolerable carapace. At these times the surface of life seems as gross a monstrosity as the bejewelled shell of des Esseintes' tortoise, artificial, *constructed.* And then how unendurable are those characters in the pub, exchanging their caustic ripostes with the most delicate hint by their creator (who is a serious man) that death lies about them or that you are only young once! How bestial is the political allegory, with its clever twists! How one storms against a writer's uncanny, futile capacity for observation! Let him shut tight his eyes, close his mouth and his ears, block up his nostrils, and then let someone hit him on the jaw. He won't be able to get away with that brilliant description of his assailant on which he longs to embark. None of those faint froths at the corner of the mouth on which a morsel of cigarette tobacco floats like a lean yellow dog on a grey sofa. None of those eyes where a scarlet molecule of anger seems to revolve like a catherine-wheel around the pupil. Nothing seen; nothing heard or smelt or tasted; just bare experience itself, the impact of a blow.

It is wickedly unfair, for the surface of life unless one is a mystic and disqualified from criticism, deserves unwearied attention. The senses, unless we are mystics, are all that we have, and those rare moments of illumination are only a by-product of the eyes and ears, an intensification of our normal perception, unverifiable—often, no doubt, moments not of heavenly light but of blindness. But when we are in the mood for this light or this blindness, nothing else will do.

Mr. Hopkinson is armoured against the various moods of a reviewer, for his stories are as various. Sensibly he appends a date to each, so that we may chart the direction of his development. Yet development is hard to discern. He has as many moods as a reviewer, and he appears to welcome them all with the same engaging hospitality. Sometimes he is colloquial, readable, chock-a-block with innuendo. He shows—and this is a baleful accusation—that he has an eye and an ear, and that he can use what they give him. In other stories he has a deeper intention; he becomes—how easily one might have written it in a different mood—more portentous. Thus, in *Over the Bridge* (1936) and *The Overgrown Track* (1947) he patiently unfolds the interna symptoms of nervous breakdown. In these stories he is never slick, though he readily exhibits slickness in some of the others. He is tortuous; he is sometimes pedestrian; he is some

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times unnatural; but he pursues his vision with an admirable ardour. Undoubtedly the best story in the book is the latest. In *The Overgrown Track* an elderly schoolmaster is obliged to retire because, contrary to all his past practice and theory, he suddenly beats a boy with inexplicable savagery. Retreating to a lonely room in London, he sets himself the solitary and heroic task of tracing this malady to its source, and at last he discovers the origin of it in a tragic love affair of thirty-five years earlier. A psycho-analyst would complain, perhaps legitimately, that this could never have been achieved without his services. But the complaint is uninteresting. The story would have been preposterous if Mr. Gray had been splayed on the consulting-room sofa—a crucifixion which is becoming far too familiar in modern fiction. As it is, Mr. Hopkinson conveys his illumination with remarkable force and remarkable tact. Love, time, despair—his complex vision has been made available to us, and we should be grateful.

Of Mr. Powers also I am persuaded that he is at his best when he is most in earnest. (His affectionate and rather whimsical humour about Catholic priests is pleasing enough, but it palls after a story or two. Indiscriminate film-goers may be reminded of Barry Fitzgerald in *The Bells of St. Mary's*, and the memory will prejudice them, perhaps unfairly, against the genuine wit which Mr. Powers displays.) His ferocious compassion strikes deeper, and rarely topples into the morass of his country's traditional sentimentality. When he writes of an anti-Negro riot he is far more than a nigger-lover, a benevolent white shocked at the treatment of an oppressed minority. He is totally engaged, and he will engage his readers totally as well. But even the most unpatronising compassion involves, whether consciously or not, an act of transference, a strenuous employment of the imagination. In sympathy, the eyes of the sympathiser grow wider; the face becomes strained with a certain hard endeavour. Mr. Powers cuts more cleanly through the surface when he describes the half-embittered, half-sanctified death of an old Franciscan. This story, *Lions, Harts, Leaping Does*, is suffused indeed with that gentle ecclesiastical humour in which Mr. Powers delights, but here it serves the severe purpose of conducting us resolutely to a brave and deadly serious conclusion. There is no compassion here and no adulation. Yet neither is there any of that tiresome contemporary malaise which we call astringency, and which seldom means more than a laugh in church or a cruel word at a death-bed. The death of Father Didymus is described by a man who has died himself, who knows the solitude and despair of death as well as its joy and acquiescence, and who knows them, not by any act of the imagination but by direct perception. This is by far the truest story in these three books.

Mr. Woodrow Wyatt has a fine discrimination and a generous catholicity. For many years now he has played his thankless and self-effacing role, and all intelligent readers of modern literature are perceptibly in his debt. He cannot conjure up material out of the air, but he makes rewarding use of what is available. What is available is not, unfortunately, a surprise, and it is Mr. Hopkinson's *The Overgrown Track* which reappears here to take the laurels of the collection. By many of these stories I was reminded of Thurber's wicked drawing of an exasperated man staring across the table at a sleepy-faced girl—"But what have you got to be enigmatic *about*, Millicent?" This, surely, is the prevailing vice of the modern English short story, a certain artful reticence, a bashful refusal to make intentions clear. It is an error to imagine that clarity must be less subtle or less complex than obfuscation, and if proof of this is needed Chehov provides it. Yet the fault is easy to over-emphasise; it is a faint sour *tendency* rather than a destructive element, and some of Mr. Wyatt's contributors are entirely free of it. But before making this unpleasant comment I should have written that these stories are good; not one of them is dull. In fact, this eighth series of *English Story* is another editorial success. PHILIP TOYNBEE

PICTURE BOOKS

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The professional art critic has to knock off an introduction to a picture book a few days before the time limit is up if he is to avoid working himself to death. He can rarely afford the luxury of second thoughts and has to acquire a facility for making plausible generalisations and snap judgments; he may be presumed to be in luck if he lands a subject that he has treated before. Mr. Heron, to whom generalising appears not to come easily, stands heroically apart from the present company of hardened introducers and has written the only introduction that tells one something new about painting. This is not to say that the others provide dull reading; some of them are more entertaining than Mr. Heron, others more ingenious, and only Monsieur Cassou is insupportable.

Dr. Read, for instance, who has written two previous assessments of the art of Paul Nash, ingeniously re-animates his opinions for the memorial volume by adopting the axiom that "what is written whilst an artist is alive can sometimes be repeated with different emphasis when he is dead." But surely this book with its documentation and invaluable collection of reproductions was the occasion not for six short, somewhat mechanical articles by various authorities, but for a long essay on Nash by someone who could come to the paintings with more innocent eyes? The production is not up to the publisher's best standard, although a number of Nash's friends have contributed towards the cost. The paper is unpleasant, and it was not a nice idea to stick the colour plates on thin grey sheets which have buckled under the paste.

Again, Mr. Gray and Mr. Wilkinson are perhaps over-familiar with their subjects: in drawing upon their extensive researches into Rajput and Mughal painting they take us on a rather unnecessary plod through the intricate paths of Indian art history and style criticism. The likeness that so many of these pictures bear to the work of Arthur Rackham is quite a formidable barrier to appreciation, and although one feels, after a long stare at slightly muffled reproductions, that Indian painters probably excel in the illustration of stories and legends, the nuances escape the uninitiated, and there is need in this type of publication for an elaborate and eloquent description of every plate.

Homage to Venus would have been an entrancing book if Mr. Laver's introduction could have been adequately illustrated, for he manages to refer to nearly every great European painter of the nude; but the plates "suggested for the most part by the editor of the series" have been selected in a different spirit. A repressed Burne-Jones and a silly pastiche of eighteenth century naughtiness by Wilson Steer have been allowed to tail on to a rosy procession of nudes simply because the goddess happens to be named in their titles. The procession begins to waver when Boucher appears, but it could have regained its glory if only Renoir's "The Blonde Bather" and a Modigliani reclining nude had found a place in the ranks.

"The Blonde Bather" is one of the colour plates in the Faber Gallery *Renoir*, which is introduced by the editor of the series. Unhappily the general standard of reproduction in this series is very low, and can interest only a public which considers a poor colour plate better value for money than a good half-tone. But Mr. Wilenski's defence of the last period is exemplary, and the Arts Council should look into his complaint that no large exhibition of Renoir's twentieth-century painting has been held in London.

The Modigliani nude I have in mind is one of the seventeen fine colour plates introduced by Mr. Nicolson. It has special historical claims to a place in *Homage to Venus* because it completes her attributes with a deliciously decorative little scrub of sexual fleece. Mr. Nicolson places Modigliani neatly and expertly as an elegant minor painter with flashes of greatness in his portraits: but he has created a macabre effect by making his assessment support a tract on the perils of drink and drugs. He turns on the tap so gently that one is unaware of "going under." One nods approval and savours the logic of Mr. Nicolson's contention that because Modigliani usually painted only single figures he must have forced his mistresses to abandon all their friends, and one can scarcely suppress an exclamation of horror when one learns from Mr. Nicolson that the young ladies who posed for the reclining nudes were not posing at all but were on their death beds.

In contrast with Mr. Nicolson's mock seriousness, the rhetoric and nationalistic fervour of Monsieur Cassou's "critical survey" of the art of Matisse—accompanied fortunately by reasonably good colour plates of some magnificent paintings—is close to farce without being amusing. Even the fact that Matisse used to run an academy for foreign students is made an occasion for praising the master who knows how to be worthy of such a title, and we are led to understand that teaching the barbarians is one of the sacred missions of the French genius. It is the kind of thing that looks rather better when it comes from one of the barbarians.

In the Vlaminck book, commentary and colour plates are evenly matched: the Modigliani plates are just as fine, and I think Modigliani is a better painter, but because Mr. Heron draws the Vlaminck plates deep into his essay and makes them function as if they were the pictures themselves this book is the most satisfying of the whole batch. His analysis of the landscape on plate II is the most brilliantly sustained example of the art of experiencing pictures that I have come across since Adrian Stokes analysed a couple of Picassos in *Colour and Form*. Mr. Heron leads one into the picture by attempting to prove that the signature in the bottom right hand corner is essential to the structure, and although one may still be unconvinced at the end of the journey, it is the journey that matters: one returns to dubiety with vivid recollections of an absorbing and thrilling expedition into imagined space.

One good colour plate is worth any number of bad ones, and it must be said that the new Penguin prints meet the demand for colour reproductions in a much more admirable fashion than the comparable books. Each of the four beautifully printed reproductions so far published is in a protective folder which at a pinch would serve as a mount. The provenance of the picture and a succinct account of the artist and his development are printed inside the cover. Three of the prints are in colour and the fourth is a faith-

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TRAVELLERS' TALES

Via Tokyo. By CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS. *Hutchinson.* 21*s.*
Delhi - Chungking. By K. P. S. MENON. *O.U.P.* 21*s.*
Across the Great Deserts. By P. T. ETHERTON. *Lutterworth Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*
Enchanted Trails. By SIR CHRISTOPHER GIBSON. *Museum Press.* 16*s.*
From Santos to Bahia. By HAKON MIELCHE. *William Hodge.* 15*s.*
North African Notebook. By ROBIN MAUGHAM. *Chapman & Hall.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

A magical signpost greets the seaplane passenger as he climbs out of the aerolaunch on to the jetty in Calcutta. Its fingers point to Batavia and Singapore, Sydney and Hongkong and Karachi, telling you how many miles you must fly over mountain, desert, ocean and paddyfield before you reach your chosen destination. But you can stay at home and make your own signpost with the help of these six travellers, and the excellent maps and photographs they provide for you.

Via Tokyo has a special interest because it introduces us to new people rather than to new places. The spirit of old places is more successfully recalled in the poems with which Mr. Christmas Humphreys interleaves his travel book. Sometimes the old and the new come together as in Horyu-Ji where the ancient Abbot showed him as a fellow-Buddhist an exquisite figure of Kwannon. It was the personal shrine of Prince Shotoku who welcomed the first Buddhist priests to Japan in the seventh century. Mr. Humphreys, a follower of the Northern School of Buddhism, was captivated by Japan. In his seven months' visit as a Junior to Mr. Comyns Carr in the International War Crimes Trials he was able to escape for 22 weekends from that "heartache of unnatural devastation, which is Tokyo." The exquisiteness of Japanese frescoes, prints, sculpture, gardens and architecture were revealed to him as Truth—in the Buddhist sense—which had no existence save in the beauty at his feet, a "peace wherein regret and hope and all comparison was void, and only the exquisite minute existed, and the will, content to be in chains, was free." Mr. Humphreys deliberately avoids horrors and war, hates politics and economics, "knows nothing about them and cares less."

The signpost now points to my own favourite journey. How well I understand Jawaharlal Nehru's remark in a charming Introduction that *Delhi-Chungking* "makes good reading and it reminds me of so many of my own fantasies and dreams of long ago." And I should choose Mr. K. P. S. Menon, the author, as my companion. He has a sense of humour, a wide knowledge of Chinese history and literature, an eye and a pen for the beauty of mountain and desert and a nostalgic time sense which makes him feel that the mantle of Marco Polo has fallen on his shoulders as he walks in the footprints of that patron saint of the Gobi.

Mr. Menon became India's first Ambassador in Nanking, made his journey in the second half of 1944 when he was appointed diplomatic representative. He kept a day-by-day Diary of his travels, by horse, yak, foot and station wagon as far as Urumchi where he took an aeroplane to Chungking. The first part of his pilgrimage took 125 days. He often recalled his schoolboy heroes, Fa-Hsien who walked from China to India in 400 A.D., and Hsuan Tsang who visited India two centuries later, returning laden with Buddhist scriptures. In Khotan, once a centre of civilisation, Mr. Menon was unable to find any trace of the old Buddhist stupas and temples which lay hidden in the dust, "beyond even the power of Stein's spade to unearth." Marco Polo, he reminds us, found that this once flourishing Buddhist kingdom had finally given in to the Muslim invaders and the people were subject to the Great Khan (Kublai Khan).

Our next traveller, Col. Etherton, takes us through the three deserts, Sahara, Kalahari and Gobi. His photographs in *Across the Great Deserts* are brilliant and exciting though a good deal of his description might have been written from an armchair with a guidebook and an atlas. He dwells rather often on the odd behaviour of foreigners. The Mongolian who proudly shows him the dried leg of mutton which is a family heirloom would probably view with equal surprise the antlers and foxheads in Col. Etherton's ancestral hall. However, Col. Etherton had unusually intimate experiences in Mongolia, particularly in one holy lamasery—unnamed—which was "a kind of Glastonbury of the snows." Lamas rose at 3 a.m. and went to bed with the sun. Time was nothing to them; they concerned themselves only with the millions who are loaded with sin, and the millions yet unborn who may be turned into the right path by prayer. This seems to me to be a more dignified occupation than political mud-slinging at the Palais Chaillot and I recommend to certain U.N.O. delegates the technique of one Lama who kept complete silence during an interview. Col. Etherton was fortunate enough to gain the confidence of an abbot who invited him to stay in a lonely monastery eighteen thousand feet high among the mountains of snow and ice; *Across the Great Deserts* is well worth reading for the sake of his weird experiences there and later on with the Khan of the Kalmucks. To judge by his diary across the Sahara and the Kalahari, he too found the Gobi the most exciting of his unusual travels.

No place could be more unlike those Mongolian plateaux than the tropical forests of Paraguay and Brazil which Sir Christopher Gibson describes in *Enchanted Trails*. Sir Christopher is a lush writer on lush country. Descended from a canny business man in Glasgow who profitably responded to "the glad tidings that the River Plate was becoming a pretty hot potato for pioneering enterprise," this author was born with the smell and the sound of the tropics. And when the call came to him to explore the great estancias so that you might have an extra piece of neat pink spam, he set off immediately with gun and fishing rod and a good supply of tinned delicacies. Between thinking, buying and selling cattle, Sir Christopher endured all sorts of discomforts as well as the joy of the chase. Vampire bats, six-inch long centipedes, and great hairy tarantulas enlivened his evenings, not to mention a wide variety of mosquitoes, ants, bugs, and ticks which could not be dislodged under two hours. Sensitive companions would have been unsuitable on such journeys. Sir Christopher knew how to choose his men to suit his purpose and his surroundings in this life which was "at its crudest; many would say Life as it should be lived."

From Santos to Bahia is like a performance of Oklahoma by comparison with *Enchanted Trails*. "A light-yellow hours. A jade-green hillside. A cinnabar-red lightbuoy that bobbed up and down in the ebbing tide . . . Two negroes paddling out of the mother-of-pearl of the estuary in a blue canoe." The choice of 11 kinds of whiskey, and streamlined cars with "amusing multi-toned horns that play proper little tunes" and lots of mulattos as well as lots of blondes with dentifricial smiles. As Mr. Hakon Mielche reminds us, there was no war in Santos, but "a flood wave of prosperity," and the city has that chromium-plated richness that comes from neutrality.

This is an exuberantly written travelbook. Mr. Mielche dragged himself away from bulging kitchens and neon lights and made a trip into the "unexplored jungle where coiled-up snakes, horrible scorpions, shaggy bird-spiders, black panthers," etc., etc., awaited him. And he came face to face with rattlesnakes, hundreds and hundreds of them in a snake institute where he bravely responded to the Director's request to take colour photographs. His account of experiments with rattlesnakes and frogs is the most fascinating and original in the book. He ends his diary at the ecstatic festival of Nossa Senhora de Conceicao de Praia in the less sophisticated city of Bahia.

Would an overdose of Marshall Aid transform the poverty-stricken Arab countries which are the subject of *North African Notebook* into the smart business centres from Santos to Bahia? Could those Berbers and Rifi so beautifully photographed and described by Mr. Robin Maugham, the author, become the hard-drinking people Hakon Mielche met at chromium bars on the Latin American coast? These were questions which I asked as I followed the last finger of our signpost—through Morocco, both Spanish and French, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya with a charming observant companion. *North African Notebook* subtly introduces the social problems which are an intrinsic part of undeveloped areas, without detracting from its interest as a diary. On the contrary. Mr. Maugham describes first-class interviews with nationalist leaders and discusses with living examples the technical backwardness of North Africa and the local politics of the Arab League. "Arab society" he writes "is still restless and divided, torn between the old world of its religion and tradition and the new world of the West."

He concludes this interesting personal contribution to our knowledge of North Africa by asking the Europeans to display "more compassion and the Arabs more common sense." And so it seems that all roads lead to politics, even the signpost which we erected for six travellers who provide an attractive adventurous escape.

DOROTHY WOODMAN

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fashion'd halls, dull aunts, and croaking rooks"? The countryside itself has hardly improved, except in plumbing and transport. Mr. Massingham would argue that it has deteriorated, and that our fond affection is either a kind of awkward penitence or sheer hypocrisy. Maybe the Town has gone downhill even faster and altogether lost—or had bombed out of it—the suave delights that appealed to Pope. Whatever the cause, we sit gladly at the feet of the nature-mystics, the mass-observers of rookeries, the dialect-collectors, the snapshot aces, the tourist guiders and the romantic chroniclers of village life. "Townee" may yet become as ubiquitous an insult as "fascist."

Certainly the centenary of Richard Jefferies could not have come at a more fortunate time, for he is obviously one of the founders of this new movement. I have lost count of the new books by or about him, and of the great figures—human and divine—with whom he has been compared. His centenary has been almost sensationally successful, and Mr. Elwin's selection will be very handy for those who want to find out what the fuss is about. I regret that a third of the book is given up to *Amaryllis at the Fair* and *The Story of my Heart* because they do not strike me as the best of Jefferies. By contrast, we have less than a dozen pages from *Wild Life in a Southern County*, which is a pity if you prefer the practical countryman with the amazing eyesight and quietly reflective mind—the "newsmonger and intelligencer," as Henley described him, "of creeping things, and things that fly, and things that run." However, Mr. Elwin offers a well-guided dip into most of Jefferies' books, and his introduction is admirable.

I suppose the difference between Jefferies and Gilbert White is that White did not get his religion and his income mixed up with his interest in Nature. More and more for Jefferies the countryside became both a livelihood and a cult, and that confusion is the unhappier part of his legacy. A writer may well demand to live by his writing, of course, and a man may read philosophy in field and wood; but if he is not careful his perceptions may fossilise in a literary convention and a "message." In the later Jefferies the touch of reality weakens and is replaced by a self-conscious beatification.

James Fisher has this peril in mind, I imagine, when he introduces *The New Naturalist* with the round assertion that "fancies are poisonous companions to the enjoyment and appreciation of Nature." The evident intention of this new "journal of British Natural History" is to introduce the museum and university scientists and research experts to the general body of "nature-lovers" and amateur naturalists. It is a valuable enterprise and it has been tackled on an ambitious scale. Eventually *The New Naturalist* will appear quarterly, but the first four numbers come in a single volume.

Such is the cargo of hopes and good wishes it carries with it that criticism is apt to over-shadow praise. The inglorious technicolour of the illustrations is disappointing. There is also the more substantial problem that most scientists find it difficult to make a large subject either palatable or exciting in the course of a short article. It is the more practised pens of Peter Scott, Brian Vesey Fitzgerald, Stephen Potter and Mr. Fisher himself which score most convincingly. Earnestly as one may support the campaign against "fancies," I hope we are not to have a new puritanism which exalts jargon and inner-circle reputation above the illuminating merits of a decent prose. It will indeed be an achievement if *The New Naturalist* can develop and foster a middle way between the treatise of the professor and the gush-and-colour of the journalist. The present four-in-one volume—dealing with Woodlands, The Western Isles of Scotland, Migration and The Local Naturalist—is patchy and seems not very clear about the nature of its audience. But there are good things in it, and it is obviously going to have a considerable influence on the popular approach to natural history.

Mr. Massingham is a far cry from Jefferies and the naturalists. His is the voice of Cobbett, rumbustious, mettlesome and as angry with his contemporaries as an Old Testament prophet. You either dismiss Mr. Massingham as a crazy reactionary, or you like him. I like him. I like his pugnacity. I like the severely practical form that his impractical visions take. I like arguing with him. I don't believe we shall abandon artificial fertilisers and food imports and a centralised urban culture, but I like a man who can rise in his fury and denounce the county of Wiltshire as "a cow-factory and a corn-factory, a manless, hedgeless, sheepless prairie, a great rolling zoo of saurian-like machines." Mr. Massingham, in short, has zest. He goes for the bowling with the sole and only intention of hitting it farther and higher over the pavilion than it has ever been hit before. As unofficial keeper of the conscience of agriculture, he reminds us of some things we do ill to forget. He probably talks some nonsense into the bargain, but it is part of the flavour of the man. And it is precisely that individual flavour which gives gusto to everything he writes. The journal form of *An Englishman's Year* suits him admirably as he can wander from "regional" culture to pear-growing, from the iniquities of Wiltshire farming to a textual point in Shakespeare.

Mr. Peel looks a bit thin in contrast. His carefully wrought poetic celebrations of country life bring us back to the realm of Jefferies. In *Small Calendars* there is the slightly pious hush delicately disturbed by a young heart "floating upon the morning air for joy's sake." Mostly Mr. Peel gives us good, quiet etchings which do credit to his taste and discrimination but lack any imperative to stiffen them.

John Moore is not so reverential though he has lofty feelings about countrymen; but he wraps them up in a most disarming blend of bonhomie, wit and deceptively British modesty. *The Blue Field* is bound to please those who already delight in Elmbury and Brensham, for it deals with the same world and is alive with humour and vivid thumb-nail sketches. Mr. Moore's vein of comedy is first-rate, but his vein of sentiment verges on musical-comedy. The colours are too rosy, the story keeps drifting into the *Oklahoma* country. I grant Mr. Moore all the charm there is, though, and am content to believe *The Blue Field* just happens to be too sweet for my palate. The field in question, incidentally, is a crop of linseed grown in defiance of a War Ag. demand for oats. I found that puzzling because they give them medals for growing linseed where I come from.

Mr. Bensusan is less beguiling but he has the solid merit of knowing his Essex people inside out. Indeed, I doubt if any living writer can surpass him in fidelity to the rhythms and phrasing of dialect. As an inventor and constructor of stories he is often clumsy, but I am sure Mr. Massingham would acclaim him—and rightly so—as a "regional" writer of high distinction. For anyone who knows the "tuckeys" and the "dutt" of the "little owld boys" in the Eastern counties, *Salt of the Marshes* is a rare delight.

Robert Gibbings has forsaken the English countryside for most outlandish parts, but no amount of logic shall make me omit his latest book about the Pacific islands. Handsomely illustrated and written with the sure but oblique wit that you can linger over pleasantly, *Over the Reefs* is a wonderful blend of legends, good *tourisme*, incredible anecdotes and graphic description. There must be a sort of reader who does not care for this, but I find it very hard to credit.

The *Life and Leisure* series is worth noticing. Miss Turner's volume on flowers, and Ralph Whitlock's on birds, are attractive to handle and generously illustrated with photos. Neither pretends to add to human knowledge, but novices will find them sound and sensible, and they have that bright, crisp look which Christmas presents ought to have.

DESMOND HAWKINS

MYTH-MAKERS

Uncle Dynamite. By P. G. WODEHOUSE. *Herbert Jenkins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Plague and I. BETTY MACDONALD. *Hammond.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Saracen's Head. By OSBERT LANCASTER. *Murray.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Rose and Ring. By W. M. THACKERAY. *Guilford Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The English Comic Album. By LEONARD RUSSELL AND NICOLAS BENTLEY. *Michael Joseph.* 15*s.*

The successful comic writer is a maker of myths. He isolates bits of ourselves, which we identify, and passes them off as archetypes. Among such, few, in modern times, have a more notable place than Mr. Wodehouse, who has given "Wooster" to the language, and whose Jeeves, archetype of the Perfect Butler, is a national possession and likely to be without heir.

Cataclysms have intervened, carrying away the Perfect Butlers, gentlemen's gentlemen, and many other friendly landmarks of the Wooster world. In a comparatively butler-less world a former addict is bound to be apprehensive. There is no need; we underrate Mr. Wodehouse if we suppose that his talent is all tied up in dead social stock. In *Uncle Dynamite* he manages brilliantly without butlers.

True, the peers, heiresses, and young men with Drones Club nicknames are there still, and not quite what they were twelve years ago. And certain conventions now seem rather trying. For example, the convention by which favourite characters are allowed to belong to, and get away with having the best of, two incompatible worlds. We have Lord Ickenham, whose disrespectable pranks, in the Edwardian paint-town-red manner, are not allowed to blind us to his "essential respectability." And "Pongo" Twistleton, a young man of absolutely decent noble birth, but in love with Sally Painter, a girl who sculpts: some sort of artist, in fact, and living in Chelsea. Mr. Wodehouse quells our proper abhorrence of the Highbrow with his description of her as a "small alert girl in beige, whose arrival *intensified the Ascot note.*"

> "I hated her mixing with all that seedy crowd in Chelsea. Bounders with beards," said Pongo with an austere shudder. "I've been in her studio sometimes, and the blighters were crawling out of the woodwork in hundreds, bearded to the eyebrows."

That said, Mr. Wodehouse allays our proper suspicions of the Philistine by describing "Pongo" as a "moody, introspective young man," who reminds Lord Ickenham "of *Hamlet.*"

In American humorous mythology there is an area which was mapped out by Alexander Woollcott, a great myth-maker. It contains rich seams of satire and sentimentality which Woolcott used in working up local personalities and incidents into national legends. This is the area in which Miss Betty MacDonald belongs; a dash of sophistication and masculine judgment would make her a splendid heiress of it. Her sentimentality and facetiousness are terrific (in her family people sorry for themselves are called "Saddos"); but her powers of exaggerated humorous observation are terrific also. And we swallow the whole (as we swallow Woolcott) because Miss MacDonald, in her 220 pages, creates a momentously unforgettable picture of the sanatorium in which she spent nine months being cured of tuberculosis.

Mr. Osbert Lancaster has been in the running for a possible place among myth-makers with his "Maud, Countess of Littlehampton"; now he draws nearer with a XIIIth-century episode of her illustrious family. *The Saracen's Head* is about William de Littlehampton, whose unheroic temper and inability "to keep a straight lance" are the despair of his ferocious mother. I found it diverting and quite excellent. Mr. Lancaster avoids archaic strains, but keeps us in period with judicious compilations of the then-topical. "Send me the Seneschal, the Head

Cassell books for Christmas

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LINDSAY DRUMMOND'S
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A volume of Short Stories by that sensitive and distinguished writer, *Margiad Evans*, entitled THE OLD AND THE YOUNG (8/6), with decorations by the author: a Photographer's Notebook of SHETLAND (12/6) by *John Peterson*, with 115 magnificent photographs and text covering the diverse activities of the islands: Music Books, *Music of the Masters* Series edited by *Gerald Abraham* and planned on novel lines, each volume devoted to the work of one composer with contributions on the various aspects by well-known authorities. TCHAIKOVSKY (9/6), SCHUBERT (9/6), SIBELIUS (9/6), and most recently GRIEG (10/6): Books on Art, *Masters of French Art* Series, each volume consisting of 16 large colour plates with an introduction to the artist's work by a distinguished art critic: latest volumes, MODIGLIANI by *Benedict Nicolson*, PICASSO: BLUE AND PINK PERIODS by *Denys Sutton* (each 25/-). A readable and scholarly Biography of JOHN LILBURNE THE LEVELLER (18/-) by *M. A. Gibb*, an expert on the period. For lighter moments, The True and Pathetic History of DESBAROLLDA THE WALTZING MOUSE (8/6) by *Noel Langley*, master of comic fantasy, illustrated sublimely by Edward Ardizzone.

FOR children, GUILFORD PRESS has a thrilling adventure story by *Mary Lutyens*, the well-known novelist, JULIE AND THE NARROW VALLEY (6/-): JINNIFER OF LONDON (7/6) by *Barbara Nixon*, the story of the gayest, prettiest and most enterprising cat in London: and in collaboration with WILFRID DAVID a long-awaited reprint of *Thackeray's* Fireside Pantomime, THE ROSE AND THE RING (7/6) about which George Saintsbury said: "The charm of the drawings . . . the unity and convincingness of the story simply defy eulogy." It follows the original model with "Mr. Titmarsh's" drawings and Edward Ardizzone has contributed a delightful new title-page and jacket.

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Groom, the Armourer, the Farrier, the Fletcher, and the Wardrobe Mistress!" roars William's mother in her castle of Courantsdair, when William is to be dispatched to join the Crusades. The account of the dreadful duels with "the insolent Paynim," Almanazor-el-Babooni, in which William gloriously redeems himself, have cruelty enough to please children of the Commando Age; and so have Mr. Lancaster's pictures.

Do any such children still read *The Rose and the Ring*, here charmingly re-issued with Thackeray's own drawings? It, too, has cruelty; memories of delicious childhood pangs salute the bit where the boorish Gruffanuff, palace-porter to King Vallombroso XXIV of Paflagonia, is turned by the Fairy Blackstick into a brass door-knocker. "As if a screw ran into his stomach, he felt a dreadful pain there, and was pinned to the door . . ." It still tells.

Alas! most of Thackeray's cruelty is of that morally vulgar type, so damaging to *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis*, in which he hounds ageing women for their false hair and false teeth, and takes upon himself to expose their "absurd pretensions." This is Thackeray the gentleman at his nastiest. He cannot forgo it even in this "fireside pantomime." For all its agreeable magic, warming-pans and characteristic background of "flattery, scandal, cards and fine clothes," I am afraid that *The Rose and the Ring* deserves its fate as a near-miss.

Evidence of the bleaker Thackeray crops up in *The English Comic Album*, where he is quoted as saying: "We will laugh in the company of our wives and children, we will tolerate no indecorum; we like that our matrons and girls should be pure." Above all, this Thackerayan world was a world of *servants*; its jokes are jokes about or against servants. The *Album*, excellently compiled and annotated by Leonard Russell and Nicolas Bentley, takes us through a hundred years of English joke-drawings, and by and large confirms the old saying, which the compilers repeat, that "English humour is no laughing matter." Honourable exceptions: in Victorian times the satires of George du Maurier (including the famous "curate's egg") and Edward Lear's Nonsense Botany, with the convincing pictures of "Nasticreechia Krorluppia" and "Manypeeplia Upsidownia." In our day the satires of George Morrow and E. V. Lucas on civilian heroism, 1914-18; a few of Low's earlier cartoons, and some recent sharp thrusts by Ronald Searle and Giles. *The English Comic Album* is recommended for serious reading.

MARK OGILVIE

MAGIC, 1948

Down the Bright Stream. By "B.B." *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Miss Kelly. By ELIZABETH S. HOLDING. *Michael Joseph.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Paddles. By EDWARD B. TRACY. *Harrap.* 4*s.*

Beyond the Marble Mountain. By HUGH GARDNER. *O.U.P.* 6*s.*

The Bear Bus. By ELIZABETH GORELL. *John Murray.* 6*s.*

Mary Plain Home Again. By GWYNEDD RAE. *Routledge.* 5*s.*

The Three Bears. By ROBERT SOUTHEY. *O.U.P.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Map That Came To Life. By H. J. DEVERSON and RONALD LAMPITT. *O.U.P.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Collins' Magazine Annual. *Collins.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Letters from a Lost Uncle. By MERVYN PEAKE. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

Ula and the Spriggans. By A. F. C. HILLSTEAD. *Faber.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Alice Through the Looking Glass. By LEWIS CARROLL. *Penguin.* 1*s.* 6*d.*

The Water Babies. By CHARLES KINGSLEY. *O.U.P.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Princess and the Goblin. By GEORGE MACDONALD. *Watergate.* 6*s.*

Plenty of fancy, hardly a grain of imagination (with one or two exceptions) do we find in these shiny new books. How many of them will be reprinted in fifty years' time? The adventures are mild and wholesome; the children, to my mind, rather indulged. With some regret I note a scarcity of fairies—not a single six-inch blonde with cold blue eye, neat white frock, wings and that useful wand. Gnomes there are, more gnarled and repellent than ever (*Down the Bright Stream*, I must admit, is a good gnome story); but the popularity of these old gentlemen puzzles me. Prettiness is at a discount, even in heroines, certainly in drawings. There is, however, a riot of animal stories in which the creatures wear little suits and dresses, sit at tables, and make the great mistake of mixing in the lives of humans on human terms. This leads to uneasy situations which bother the reader and make the author too nervous to settle things properly. There are exceptions. *Miss Kelly* (about a talking cat, a kind of Lady Cicely Waynflete of the animal world) shows how well such a theme may be treated by a clear-minded writer. Miss Kelly is not, I think, the first cat in literature to speak; she is certainly the most discreet and well-bred. I followed her activities with respectful fascination. *Paddles* is also to be commended, a knowledgeable and refreshingly uncoy story of a seal.

Tastes in animals are varied but definite. While at twelve the favourite is the pony, at eight, a more philosophical age, it is unquestionably the bear, a creature less violent in movement and less austere in its diet. (At five, I fancy, it is the mouse.) Out of the abundance of bear books I would select the well-produced *Beyond the Marble Mountain*, one of the few whose drawings are entirely without vulgarity. Goat, Ostrich, Owl and Bear go to seek their fortune. "'And what is a fortune like when you find it?' asked Owl. 'I've really got no idea at all,' answered Goat. 'But I'm hoping that mine will be something soft and pink.' 'It sounds like a blancmange to me,' thought Owl. But being a wise old bird he didn't say it." *The Bear Bus*, though it falls into some of the errors I have mentioned, is a comfortable, ambling story about a number of toy bears of varying size and intelligence, whose absurd doings should make the simplest six-year-old feel benevolently wise. It is also the fattest of the bear books. Read aloud by an adult of placid temperament it should last a whole winter of rainy afternoons. Mary Plain of *Mary Plain Home Again* is a likeable little bear, illustrated, I am glad to say, without human clothes. An ungentle child might consider that she is too much fussed over by her grown-up admirers. And here, in an elegant large script, we have a reprint of the original *Three Bears* by Southey. The artist, we are told, has drawn an authentic cottage of the period; why then are the bears wearing modern tweed suits, collars and ties? It is interesting to find that the intruder is not Goldilocks but an Old Woman; and that the last sentence, where the author wonders if she was "taken up by the Constable and sent to the House of Correction for a vagrant as she was" is the only sign that this is a pre-Victorian version.

For older and quite practical children, *The Map That Came to Life* carries out a clever idea. Two children take a journey which is illustrated, page by page, with a section of the ordnance map they are following and a large picture of the actual scene. Many will also enjoy *Collins' Magazine Annual*, a handsome and up-to-date affair with a complete serial by Norman Collins ("What will the boy discover when he wakes aboard the *Nero*? Where is the rascally crew bound for and what is their trade? Read in the next issue . . .") as well as puzzles, letters, stories and articles on such matters as Living in a Lighthouse or How to Cure a Skin. Two in particular held my enthralled attention. One was on the new Sadlers Wells Ballet School. The other was on Skull-collecting as a Hobby (they are animals' skulls, by the way). To clean them you leave them in a perforated tin until the business is completed by—I quote from memory—"a seething mass of maggots." It is not, perhaps, suitable for every parent.

For unusual children there are one or two unusual books. What can we say about *Letters From a Lost Uncle*, the smallest book of the pile and by far the most strange and wild? For though it is permissible to be whimsical or sentimental or even ungrammatical, to be frightening is against the rules. The old ruffian who writes to his nephew from the Arctic wastes (he types villainously and draws like Mr. Mervyn Peake at his best) is like a much tougher version of the Ancient Mariner: I am not sure that they haven't met at some time. One of his legs is the ivory spike of a swordfish; his weird servant Jackson is a half-tortoise; his Quest is the most fantastic thing of all. There are no easy explanations to the mysteries of *Ula and the Spriggans*, a long story set in ancient Cornwall. "Would you take flight (Ula the blackbird is asked) in the desolate haunted ways, when the moon is no more than a lance and the wind screams defiance mid the rocks where the sea's gathered voices are more terrible than the roll of thunder?" Of course he would; a Hooting Cairn, a heroine dressed in palest blue with wavy fair hair, evil Spriggans, good Small People—it is a pleasure to meet such unabashed magic.

But the best value is in the reprints. Among them I am glad to see a Penguin *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, with all the Tenniel pictures and a really excellent introduction, and a complete *Water Babies*. In spite of some startling outbursts on Americans, Irishmen, Darwinism, the new School Board, people who look forward instead of looking back, and other topical vexations, it has enough invention for about ten new books. The escape down the fell side, and Tom's long sea journey seem to me, as I look at them now, particularly fine. At the age of ten I thought *The Princess and the Goblin* the best long fairy tale ever written. Reading this wonderful book again, I believe I think so still. Here it is for some fortunate child; the goblins with their toeless feet are burrowing under the mountain towards the palace; Curdie the boy-miner is watching them unobserved (or so he thinks); while high up all the staircases the princess's great-great-grandmother, who knows everything, and looks no more than twenty-three, weaves her magic thread. The original illustrations by Arthur Hughes really make the princess as charming and the grandmother as beautiful as they are meant to be. I suspect, though, that today those goblins, so quaintly ugly, would be the chief characters.

NAOMI LEWIS

COMPILATIONS

The Mint. No. 2. Edited by GEOFFREY GRIGSON *Routledge.* 5*s.*

The Saturday Book. Edited by LEONARD RUSSELL. *Hutchinson.* 21*s.*

Harvest. Edited by VINCENT STUART. *Castle Press.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Writers of To-day. Volume 2. Edited by DENYS VAL BAKER. *Sidgwick & Jackson.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

In his introduction to the second number of *The Mint*, Mr. Grigson writes of the miscellanies as substitutes for the old kind of periodical we used to know: "They may be inadequate substitutes, less flexible, by nature more confined and with less character of editorial aim. But they are necessary. . . ." Certainly it is a great loss that periodicals cannot now just start up spontaneously, flourish and die and then sprout again under some other title and some other grouping. That made for a vitality and liveliness in Letters which is sadly absent at the moment. And the miscellany is no substitute. The best periodicals (they were usually in a minority of one at any one time) directed taste and fashion; the second best crystallised it. Certainly, too, a periodical edited by Mr. Grigson would have an excellent influence (*New Verse* did). As an editor he has a high

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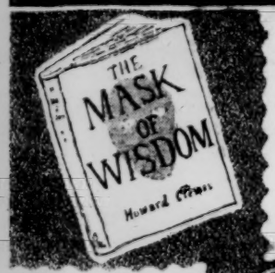

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standard of judgment, an idiosyncratic taste, that touch of the cantankerous that belongs to the good editor and an excellent nose for a "find." All these qualities are revealed in the new *Mint*, a most intelligent production. The solid body consists of essays, by Mr. Wyndham Lewis on de Tocquevilles' *Democracy in America*, by Douglas Bush on Seventeenth-century Authorship, by Janko Lavrin on Nicolai Leskov, and by Otto Demus on the Methods of the Byzantine Artist, all distinguished by lively and direct writing as well as by their intrinsic merits; Mr. Newby with a piece on the novel "Supper with Polonius" provides the cantankery; and for "finds" there is a lecture by W. H. Auden on Criticism in a mass society; a rescued Edwardian poet, John Meade Falkner; and Simone Weil's very remarkable essay on the Iliad.

Mr. Auden's lecture is delivered in his full gown, chalk and blackboard manner, which gives a specious air of absolutism to a series of interesting but debatable propositions. It is high time this manner was dropped (indeed it may have been by now; the lecture was delivered in 1941). But, manner apart, the propositions *are* very debatable, and as always Mr. Auden has most suggestive things to say provided we can bring ourselves to listen.

The late John Meade Falkner is certainly a poet who deserves to be rescued, an ancestor, we may suppose, of Mr. Betjeman's. One stanza of one poem called "After Trinity" will serve to engage the attention:

> We have done with dogma and divinity,
> Easter and Whitsun past,
> The long, long Sundays after Trinity
> Are with us at last;
> The passionless Sundays after Trinity,
> Neither feast day nor Fast.

But *The Mint* would be worth buying, in my view, if for nothing else for the article, "The Iliad, the Poem of Force," by Simone Weil. Memories of the Iliad, read piecemeal at school, must lie in some large dusty trunk in the lumber room of many minds beside my own. This essay brings these shades compellingly alive and sends one instantly to library or bookshop to chip the rust off forgotten Greek or search for a good translation, though I haven't found any to equal the translations (presumably by the author) in the course of this article. I make no apology for using so much space out of so little on *The Mint*. At five shillings it is far the best buy of any of the miscellanies I have seen this season and it is excellent news that it is now to appear more frequently.

The Saturday Book at a guinea is quite a different proposition. *The Mint* is for the attentive reader, *The Saturday Book*, eminently what is called a dipper's volume, is meant in plain words for the inattentive. It is subtitled a "cabinet of curiosities and looking-glass of past and present." The taste with which it is adorned (it is what publishers sometimes call "lavishly" or even "sumptuously" illustrated) has a leaning towards Victoriana, photographs taken by Lewis Carrol, Staffordshire pottery figures, pre-Raphaelite paintings. These last are the least successful of the reproductions which are otherwise admirable.

The book is a kind of tasteful patchwork quilt; in the letterpress C. P. Snow on Hardy the Mathematician Watching Cricket jostles against Sheila Kaye Smith as She Rambles Round an Edwardian dinner table. Turning points in the lives of Bertrand Russell, C. E. M. Joad and Sir Norman Birkett precede sketches on Skittles a Victorian Courtezan, Queen Victoria's John Brown and Albert Schweitzer. There is a story by R. C. Hutchinson that almost persuades me to re-apply for membership in the select club of his admirers; and another by Mr. Alan Pryce Jones that confirms me in the membership of his; while Miss Dilys Powell contributes a fine astringent descriptive piece on a tributary of the Thames, the Evenlode—a model of non-woozy topographical writing accompanied by admirable photographs in the same style. In short, I should expect to find *The Saturday Book* with its discreet good taste and its quite undisturbing, indeed uneventful, good manners on my bedside table if ever I were asked down to one of those well-decorated regency country cottages, and I should not be surprised to find from the inscription that it had been sent to my host by a client as a Christmas present "in gratitude for the charming way he has done up No. 345, Chester Square."

Harvest is a new venture designed to "illuminate pictorially, poetically and in prose the various facets of a single topic." In this case the excuse is Travel, and it opens with an Essay, in a manner that has now for some time been out of fashion, by C. J. Sisson. The essay, in fact, is necessarily the mainstay of the volume, and, consequently, for those who have lost the taste for this form, it will seem a little thin. I confess to being one of them, and in spite of Miss Sackville-West, Mr. Daniel George and Mr. Evan John, *Harvest* does not revive my taste. The essays are interspersed with poems old and new and reproductions of pictures old and new. Among the new poems it is refreshing to see Roy Cambell at work again and the pictures are sufficiently diverse. But one does not feel that much life beats through this volume and I should hope that any host who put it out for me beside my bed would give me something good and strong and "hot" as an alternative.

Writers of To-day is a series of critical studies of contemporary writers. This second volume includes the excellent essay on Evelyn Waugh by Rose Macaulay, which appeared lately in *Horizon*, and that on Virginia Woolf by Mr. John Lehmann, which appeared in *Penguin New Writing*. The rest are printed now for the first time. Essays of rather varying quality on Auden, Silone, H. E. Bates, John Cowper-Powys, Thomas Mann, Somerset Maugham. Particularly welcome is Mr. Rayner Heppenstall's account of Jean-Paul Sartre, a writer whom one of our native fits of obstinacy or puritanism has decided to treat in a consistently philistine manner. Mr. Heppenstall is critical, not merely adulatory, but he is serious and illuminating. This is the best short introduction to Sartre that I know and it has the merit, not noticeable elsewhere in writing on this author, of being both lucid and readable. He concludes justly as I think by saying: "And I think at least in terms of brute calories he is the most vital of our contemporaries."

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W. H. ALLEN

ledges of puberty it pipes its simple matter of fact tale.

Not that this is in any way an exceptional batch. The time-lag is about thirty-five years, which is as it should be. The historical adventure story is still a favourite. Mr. Norman Collins has written a good strong one in *Black Ivory*. Ralph Rudd, a 13-year-old, with the bold leathery ego of the juvenile hero, so much bolder always than the diffident "I" of the grown-up biographer, gets shanghaied on board a slaver and has several years' frantic adventure before arriving back in England in irons to stand trial at Newgate and be cleared in a last-minute showdown. The atmosphere varies from robust bloodthirstiness to faintly Conradian gloom. *The Boy in Red* is a perky little Anglo-Dutch aristocrat who becomes page to William the Silent, runs messages through the enemy lines, is tortured by the Spaniards, saves his master's life at the siege of Antwerp. The dialogue is sometimes a bit on the stap-me side ("Tut, tut, what a fierce little turkey cock it is." "You cannot appear in those mud-bespattered garments."). But it all goes with an agreeably old-fashioned swing.

The holiday adventure is well represented. In *Bush Holiday*, Martin, whose pretty widowed mother isn't very happy in Australia, goes off alone to stay at a homestead in the bush. The mixed diet of steaks, eggs and Chinese food suits his viscerotonic temperament. He rides around with an Australian girl named Penny, who calls him her "cobber," gets bushed, suffers from a slightly exaggerated fear of reptiles, and finally acquires a dashing stepfather. All very fresh, wholesome, toothsome and lively. And the illustrations are a lot better than the average, which is still the same fuzzy old line drawing in which everything looks like a haystack, that one got in *Chums* before 1914. In *Mystery Christmas*, Tim Forest, an orphan, "though not at all unhappy"—separation from the parent is a necessary part of the picaresque convention, but its psychological significance needs investigation—lives with Uncle Roger, a writer. He has Sid Parr, a cockney orphan and rather a tough egg, to stay for the hols. Adventures include a miser's hoard in a cellar. Slang and general atmosphere is *du côte de chez* Billy Bunter: "Gosh, what a fizzing place to explore!" with an occasional contemporaneous "Whizzo!" and modish cockney back-chat by Sid. Altogether a very friendly if rather tame entertainment for the 8 to 12s. *Behind the Dragon's Teeth* is slightly, only very slightly, more sophisticated. Nigel and Nancy Matthews, on easy terms with their widowed father, the professor ("That tie is dreadful, darling"), are on holiday at a Cornish luxury hotel. The professor is called away ("they want me for that important conference in Germany"), so they have Brian and Pamela to stay, and chum up with a rather older boy, an ex-commando, in fact, who owns a sports Alvis, teaches Nancy the crawl, and gets them all involved in tracking down a pair of very mild crooks who are after "certain jewels lost during the war with Alan's uncle of the intelligence, known to have been bringing them to England in a motor boat."

The next three belong to the changeless *Chums* or *Boys' Own Paper* adventure thriller class. On the first page of *Scourge of the Skies*, Bill Calvert, senior test pilot, announces, with a new high for nonchalance, that the "bandit squadron which has been destroying factories all over Europe, shooting down aircraft and sinking shipping on the High Seas," is "at it again."

"There's something behind it, of course", observes young Guy Howard, the third member of the trio.

There is, indeed. A solider, more naturalistic job is *Mystery of the Key* by the hardy perennial Percy F. Westerman, about sponge-fishing in the Caribbean. A contemporary note is struck by references to the millionaire housing ramp in the Bahamas. "The ferocious simian," whom they didn't expect to "make a fight of it," is not really out of place among the new-world fauna; he is somebody's pet. South American waters form the background for *The Ship of Missing Men*, the story of a horror-voyage. Dagoes are as niffy as ever; indeed, the "air is heavy with the scent of Valparaiso's mixed population."

MAURICE RICHARDSON

BOOKS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

The Voyage of the Luna I. By DAVID CRAIGIE. *Eyre & Spottiswoode*. 6s.
With My Little Eye. By ROY FULLER. *John Lehmann*. 8s. 6d.
The Ring of Fortune. By MARGARET PRIESTLEY. *Faber*. 8s. 6d.
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The Young Detectives. By R. J. MCGREGOR. *Penguin Books*. 1s. 6d.
The Secret of Dead Man's Cove. By R. J. MCGREGOR. *Penguin Books*. 1s. 6d.
The Secret of Hangman's Wood. By R. J. MCGREGOR. *Boardman*. 6s.
The Otterbury Incident. By CECIL DAY LEWIS. *Putnam*. 7s. 6d.
Winter on the "Johnny Smoker." By MILDRED HOUGHTON COMFORT. *Frederick Muller*. 6s.
The Zoo Mystery. By FAY KING. *Frederick Muller*. 6s.
The Lincoln Imp. By PRISCILLA NOVY. *Pilot Press*. 7s. 6d.
The Hidden Treasure of Glaston. By ELEANORE M. JEWETT. *Dennis Dobson*. 7s. 6d.
The Hills of Varna. By GEOFFREY TREASE. *Macmillan*. 8s. 6d.

This list of books for children of school age falls naturally into two classes—the Ambitious and the Conventional. Though the Ambitious are usually much better written, the Conventional can on the whole give them points for plot-construction and power to please.

There are four books, none of them without merit, which qualify as Ambitious—the first and best, *The Voyage of the Luna I*, by challenging comparison with Jules Verne and H. G. Wells. This is a breathlessly exciting account of the adventures of two children who manage to stow away in a rocket which a professor is launching to the Moon, and who thus actually become the first men in the Moon. The scientific background is plausible enough, and the descriptions of the journey through space and the Moon landscape (adumbrated in Dorothy Craigie's mysterious drawings) are stirring and convincing. I should be surprised if any boy or girl between 9 and 14 could read this book without their eyes popping out of their heads. *With My Little Eye* (13-15) is called "a mystery story for teen-agers." It is exceptionally well written, full of vivid characters and good jokes, and begins strikingly with a murder witnessed by the hero in his father's court-room. Yet it disappoints in its latter half by galloping away into picaresque chaos, and becoming turgid with sinister and unexplained events. The climax is a traumatic chase through an underground tunnel, ending in the suicide of the almost too terrifying villain in the hero's presence. The scene of *The Ring of Fortune* (10-14) is the imaginary country of Prosperito, where intrigue and rebellion lead at last to the reinstatement of the rightful king. The cast is a large one, and the plot is at times in danger of losing its way in the forest of polyglot names which the authoress has evidently enjoyed inventing. The nation occupying Prosperito, the wicked Uralians, are characterised by senseless brutality and have names such as Count Garstein and Captain Von Erlen, but it is probably unfair to detect in this the whiff of a political allegory. William Harris, disdaining smugglers and secret passages, has certainly thought up an original plot for his *Mystery in the Holiday* (10-14). Believe it or not, this is the mystery: Who stole from the famous psycho-analyst the case-history of one of his patients (a political candidate with a morbid fear of crowds) intending, by exposing the secrets of the confessional, to ruin his chances

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of election? Quite an exciting story, if the premisses are accepted.

There are several ingredients which have a habit of cropping up in the Conventional adventure story—an immensely old house by the sea, smugglers, underground passages, a pony or two, a cave, a tent. They all figure in the efficient cookery of R. J. McGregor, and the recipe is a well-tested one, guaranteed to make good cakes even if they differ surprisingly little one from another. All three books by this author can be recommended as exciting reading for those between 8 and 13. The families to whom the adventures happen are indefatigably brave and resourceful—"jolly decent," in fact, and "tremendously keen" on all sorts of things, and the worst they ever do is to call each other "you revolting child." The *Johnny Smoker* is a river steamer on the Mississippi, on which an American Family Robinson picnic for the winter. Miss Comfort's book has a distinct charm, not entirely due to the delicious meals on which the family guzzles daily—wild roast turkey and sweet rutabagas, cream gravy, flannel cakes, popcorn, and ducks stuffed with savoury rice. No wonder they are so innocently merry, with cheeks permanently "flushed with happiness." It would be best for a girl from 8 to 14.

Cecil Day Lewis's *The Otterbury Incident* (8-13) is a sure success. Here is a story by a poet who can enter into the minds of Prep. Schoolboys and sprinkle his text with "super," "smashing," and "wizard" without causing one the faintest embarrassment. It is lively, amusing and dramatic, and illustrated copiously by Ardizzone with pictures of little rat-like boys scurrying about on their nameless pursuits. *The Zoo Mystery* (7-12) concerns a wicked keeper, a gang of jewel thieves and a black-cloaked stranger who writes cryptic messages on the shell of the tortoise. In *The Lincoln Imp* (9-14) boy, tom-boy and uncle who calls them "chaps" take a trip on a motor yacht on an East Anglian river. "'It's going to be an Adventure,' Christina said," raising expectations which are hardly gratified.

Two historical novels remain, either of which would be a suitable present for someone between 12 and 15 with archaeological interests. Both are respectable well-built stories, backed up by serious research and with the details carefully, if a trifle earnestly, filled in. I like best *The Hidden Treasure of Glaston*, a stimulating book with a plot partly based on historical fact and partly on the Arthurian legends and the Holy Grail. In *The Hills of Varna* the hero is sent by Erasmus in quest of the manuscript of a lost play by a fabulous Greek poet, and meets with pirates and hairbreadth escapes from fire and water.

The supply of books for older children is better this Christmas than it has been for several years, and it is not from a desire to carp that the following suggestions are made: Is it really necessary for fathers and mothers to be such a monotonously uniform lot? Good sports one and all, they never interfere, yet are always dependably in the background. Mother always works so hard ("Mother's work for the hospital and her being in the County Council meant that she had to be given some sort of hand") and yet manages to look so nice ("Mother had her flowered green delaine on"). Father is so distinguished ("Dad's pictures are well known *and* sell"). Couldn't we for a change have a few parents who are eccentric, wicked or even dead, as in the good old days? And why must children's books always be *about* children? It was not thought necessary by Rider Haggard and Conan Doyle, and it seems to have a limiting, cramping effect on both theme and style. And how many adults can really put themselves inside the minds of children, or guess what lies behind the inscrutable faces of a crowd of schoolboys returning from the holidays? No wonder writers find it a problem to anticipate their desires and cater for their holiday reading; no wonder that their guesses sometimes fail to hit the mark.

FRANCES BIRD

AN AWFUL PLACE

The Antarctic Ocean. By RUSSELL OWEN. *Museum Press.* 18*s.*

Logbook for Grace. By ROBERT CUSHMAN MURPHY. *Hale.* 15*s.*

"Great God! This is an awful place." The words are Scott's, the place the South Pole. He knew, of course, even before he set out, that the South Pole could not be less than awful. "Explorers," says Mr. Owen, in his *The Antarctic Ocean*, "talk of science, but they mean the wish to be where other people cannot go. Perhaps, some day, somebody will explain this call of the ice, for it is the call of immobility, of silence, of death." Perhaps no further explanation than that is needed, for of all men the polar explorer is one who has been seized to an extreme degree by what Dr. Johnson superbly calls "that hunger of the imagination which preys incessantly on life."

And that is why, confronted with a Scott or Shackleton, the mind in its search for comparable figures conjures up not so much other men of action, as writers like Dostoevsky and Rimbaud and the great mystics; why, too, whatever may be the contributions made by polar exploration to science, they are in the end quite irrelevant. However, they may have rationalised their activities, the great polar explorers have been men who laboured under a sense of doom.

This Mr. Russell Owen, not himself an explorer though he went with Byrd to the Antarctic as the representative of a New York newspaper, understands, and it gives an additional dimension to what otherwise would be not more than a good popular history of Antarctic exploration. He is eminently fair-minded in a field of studies marked more often by rancour and wholesale accusations of lying than by charity. A conspicuous example of his fairness is his treatment of Dr. Cook; the fact that Cook was later sent to jail for fraud, for claiming to have reached the North Pole before Peary, does not prevent him from giving him just praise for his most gallant and resourceful behaviour in the *Belgica* expedition to the Antarctic of 1897. Mr. Owen is also good on the earlier, less well-known explorations of Weddell and Wilkes. A bibliography would have added to the value of the book.

Logbook for Grace records the author's voyage to the Antarctic in an American whaler in 1912-13. Dr. Murphy was then a young man just out of college, and newly married, and his book consists of the day-to-day journal he kept for the benefit of his wife. Written without thought of publication, it paints an attractive self-portrait. Dr. Murphy sailed on the brig *Daisy* as a naturalist, and the model he took for himself was Darwin. "How I long," he notes, "to see with the eyes of that matchless man of science, and to write with his pen!" His aim accordingly was to be "both a naturalist and a humanist"; and it is as a humanist that Dr. Murphy appears in these pages, bird-watching, studying the anatomy of the sea-elephant, mapping hitherto unexplored areas of South Georgia, and reading, reading all Shakespeare, Melville, Bunyan, the odes of Horace, *The Divine Comedy*. The last he gave, in Wicksteed's translation, to the skipper, Captain Cleveland, a close, tight-fisted old New Englander, to read. "The skipper," he records, "has finished both *Hell* and *Purgatory*, and is now half-way through *Paradise*. . . . He has remarked, 'Dante had a head on him.'" The portrait that emerges of the old whaling captain is admirable, and all the details of life aboard the *Daisy* are fascinating. Conditions were certainly as primitive as when Dana sailed before the mast in the eighteen-thirties, and the sufferings from scurvy of the crew, mainly West Indian negroes, scarcely less severe than those of ships' crews in the days before Captain Cook introduced anti-scorbutic foods more than one hundred and thirty years earlier. Dr. Murphy lacks Dana's literary skill but his book deserves a place on the same shelf as *Two Years Before the Mast*.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

WHILE he was about, you might have run into Nevinson anywhere, in Ireland, Angola, Washington, Jerusalem, Berlin, India or on Mt. Helicon. If the last, he was at home and at ease; elsewhere, he had arrived in haste long before, and you could be sure ease and home were far away. His presence meant that trouble was all you would find there. I met him first one night well back towards the beginning of the century in a Belfast oyster bar. It looked, and perhaps was, a conspirator's cave, subterranean and appropriately dim. The Irish trouble was then beginning to look worse than a newspaper uproar, even to English journalists who had never heard of the Four Masters, did not know the meaning of the Boyne, and had never read and never would read Lecky's volumes on 18th-century Ireland. I had no word with Nevinson in that cellar. I doubt he ever knew I was mixed with that little company of younger men, all puzzled by the unexpected and vehement foreignness of Ireland, and surprised by its explosive nature. Of course, I knew Nevinson's work. Who didn't? He was already a grandee in journalism. The *Manchester Guardian*—which was C. P. Scott—would give him a free hand. What more was there to say? He was well on the way to be legendary, and I could see why, at a glance; that night it was best for me to look on and listen. His voice was restrained, he was tolerant of inexperience; his ready laugh was gentle, but his oblique words, answering nonsense when it showed too much confidence, caused loud laughter in others following that requisite silent pause in which his audience could consider what he meant. I could see, also, despite his manner of a kindly patrician, that he was a dangerous man. Though he might not resent a personal affront, accustomed as he was to folly, it seemed to me he would prove the very devil if the offence were to a cause or person that had won his devotion. He was as rational as if his lifelong pursuit had been, not in the classics, but science; and it was safe to assume that he could be, when he chose, as romantic as a crusader tranced in a holy quest. When he was in that state, look out! I knew he had travelled far, and had seen, as we had not, the worst of war. He had consorted on equal terms with the great ones of the earth. We younger men, with our stout and waters over the volcano that had not yet gone out, but was sizzling and sulphurous, were of little experience. The unnumbered dead in Flanders infinity of grey mud were not yet. Several of us there, besides Nevinson, had published books, though my own first venture was less than the ghost of a thought. Ancient graves, that night, were stirring in Ireland. Spectres out of a dark past could be sociable over whisky in the pubs by the dockyards; the portent in the world beyond, aided by a little imagination, was at least as large as a man's hand; but the talk at that table, Nevinson presiding—it was a bare board, dark with old beer stains—was not of politics and war, nor of the woes of Ireland. It was of literature, and particularly of the art of telling out a short story.

How this should be done, explained by the men there who had done it, I regret I have forgotten, so I can pass on no valuable secret. This is because it became clear to me, as I listened respectfully to what I ought to know, that Nevinson was more important than any theory of art; he was a person. His work would come first, and a theory could fit it afterwards. I can see now, since my friend Mr. Brailsford* had provided us with so moving an aid to memory, Nevinson's salient prose superior to all the others in that question-ridden Irish haunt. His head was the more pronounced because it had, in a Rembrantesque way, got of the benefit of an oil lamp hanging from the blackened ceiling, a lamp otherwise of little avail against the gloom that beset us.

He and I were often in Ireland after that. I was there one rainy midnight of 1914 when a telegraph clerk leaned confidentially across the counter and whispered huskily that the office had been busy all that day calling up the fleet reserves. Naturally, it was found then that Nevinson was no longer in Belfast. Nobody had seen him go. He was always the first to smell new trouble in the offing, and was away to meet it before the rest of us were aware of what we were in for. His absence told me I should be out of Ireland by the next boat, and I was. Now I think of it, of the many men I met in those days while confusion grew worse and violence increased, it is Nevinson's head, and Casement's, that still stand out with distinction when so much else has become faded and featureless; and I suppose that it is a trifle of testimony, should we feel oppressed by the ubiquity of confident ignorance, and of the overwhelming magnitude of material things, to the longevity of selfless and valiant spirit.

He was not benign when next I saw him. In fact, though he stood quietly explaining something or other to a newspaper proprietor, who reposed on the other side of a desk, looking extremely perplexed, Nevinson's eyes were blazing with rage. I had often heard that eyes could blaze, but I had never before seen them doing it. Now I knew it was possible. There was something awesome about it, and this witness felt diminished, and glad, too, of his exemption. I left the room, and learned only long after of what had set fire to his regard. It seems that the first battle of Ypres was being fought, and Nevinson, by some means, for war-correspondents in those early days were outlaws and could be imprisoned without trial, had been in the front line. So far, no correspondent had witnessed the battleground but distantly; in fact, nobody but the soldiers knew anything, and they didn't know much, and that little, as a rule, was wrong. Nevinson had been over the calamitous ground. A "scoop" was in his hands, and the press was waiting. Would he write it? Not he. He was under a bond of silence, and the plea that he should break his bond, to let an anxious public into the know, so badly afflicted him that his face was that of one who would perish, but truth and honour must live. I am glad of an opportunity to record this, since it pleases some people to suppose that the opinions of journalists are readily sold, and are often cheap.

Nevinson remarked blithely to me, as with Massingham and others we left *The Nation*, that he never joined a paper but it sank under him. There is in his reminiscences of Changes and Chances a further dry aside, that "one morning he woke up in Jerusalem, not famous, but seventy." He was but famous in his profession. His "middles" in *The Nation* were never signed. Only a few of us knew who had written that delightful *Farewell to America*, included in this anthology. It was pirated extensively in America, without a cent for its author, despite its profitable popularity. He used his gifts magnanimously, as a sower broadcasts seed-corn trusting that it will take root, should the general ground prove to have a suitable patch here and there. That is why he was once said to be "the gallant advocate of lost causes." Lost? But Nevinson had prescience, that odd faculty of genius, and therefore he would support a cause at a time when, as the original Twelve discovered, there is no fun in it but the desperate fun of going on regardless. Hope may be faint while confronting the common adverse will of men, but faith remains that good is better than wrong. The causes Nevinson supported were not lost; his eloquent advocacy was made in the early wilderness, that is all. But he never made any money out of it; certainly he lost in that sense. "After all," as Birrell once pointed out to a loud opponent who had scoffed at the paucity of his following, "after all, the Apostles could have been packed into a four-wheeler."

Another misfortune for him was that he was so various. No category quite suited him. He could discourse with knowledge and charm on many subjects from Pan and the Olympians down to whatever might be engaging the earnest attention of Fleet Street in that hour; he could do all that unless, of course, he was absent, nobody knew where, on one of his crusades in his other character as a man of action. He was never classed as a critic of letters, and we may wonder over that omission while reading him here on Goethe, Heine, Swift, Synge, Meredith and Hardy. His essay on Hardy is new to me, and its insight is a surprise, for that essay must have been written long before solemn awe came over others.

> In the very look of him one seems to detect the shy animal of heaths and woods—as the offspring of earth, with ear always close to the ground. But into that primitive being the tormenting spark of intellect has entered. With pity and irony the rather sad eyes look out upon the brotherhood of mankind, so near the earth and so desirous of heaven, and all the face displays a curious sensitiveness—the same intense susceptibility to the piteousness of life that throws the shadow of the gallows across so many of his books . . .

He has gentle fun while admiring his great hero Goethe, scanning his majesty back and front; he does not emphasise the faults in the god, but there is a quiet but sparkling aside or two about him as we leave the radiant presence. It is therefore meet that the frailties of Heine bring no ironic smile, but a severe defence, from another crusader, of a transcendant gift to the world. And he says the word of Swift's terrible genius that concludes the matter:

> It was not any spirit of hatred or cruelty, but an intensely personal sympathy with suffering, that tore his heart and kindled that furnace of indignation against the stupid, the hateful, and the cruel to whom most suffering is due; and it was a furnace in which he himself was consumed.

There is no help for it, we are bound to admit it, that Nevinson was, as Mr. Brailsford declares, a master of the essay form. We admit it with reluctance. That form in the art of writing, the essay, though so very rarely as successfully natural as the daffodils that take the winds of March with beauty, does not now commend a writer to the general. The reason for this is a sad lapse in the art of reading. Few of us read with the ear as well as with the eye. Nevinson must be read with both. He is a writer; and that is now old-fashioned. It is heartening for those who were brought up in his tradition to hear the echoes in his work of the periods of what has been called "the noblest monument of English prose." Sceptic though he was, he was under the spell. Yet sceptic? Consider him, relishing his irony the while, on a piece in this volume entitled "The Holy Spirit."

Consider him well. For it would be hard to deny that what Duhamel calls "typographical art," the art of the bookman, is not in peril; perhaps it is already obsolescent. This concerns our culture. But recently our children, in their treble voices, could attempt to intone "a majestic march of rhythms like that of an army with banners." Nevinson, of course, would accept that music as he would the stars at midnight; it was in the nature of things. The Psalms, and much besides, were familiar as household words; this went quite well, as no doubt I shall be told, with the Victorian paraffin lamps that lighted the open book. It was part of our heritage; but it is lost. Instead, we have the radio, and the vernacular of the sound-track. Not now the inner ear, and inwit, but an authority outside, mechanical, dominant and inescapable. Quite in the spirit of this new age, some English writers have deplored that the traditional measure of our diction, made free by King James translators, has so vitiated our written word; thus we have missed the lucidity and directness that French prose has gained. In an age of scepticism, when emotion can be traced nearly always to a dismal physic lair, and is droll, human dignity becomes but an Aunt Sally for a swift shot. Our old diction respected this dignity, and so it is out of date. Nevinson's essays, anyhow, indicate what has been lost.

H. M. TOMLINSON

*Essays, Poems and Tales of H. W. Nevinson. Edited by H. N. Brailsford. *Gollancz.* 18s.*

THE AMERICAN SAGA

"Mr. President." By MAURICE ASHLEY. London, *Cape*. 21*s*.

Thomas Jefferson and American Democracy. By MAX BELOFF. *English Universities Press*. 5*s*.

There are some pleasant signs to suggest the emergence, at long last, of a permanent interest in American history in this country; more than three years after the end of the war, at any rate, publishers are still willing to believe that there exists a body of readers ready to examine what is an epic as profound and as exciting as that of Greece or Rome. No doubt we are still, for the most part, confined to popular histories or to accounts of men and things which directly influenced our own epoch. But it is at least a beginning, and, if the University Grants Committee were to prove a little imaginative, we might even hope to go on to the stage where an English edition of a really scholarly work, like Professor Randall's study of Lincoln as President, was the rule, rather than the exception. For since it happens that, at the moment, American historical writing is about the best in the world, and since it really is important for us to understand this strange people, with its overwhelming power brooding over our own destiny, we ought to make something more than the present casual arrangements for the study of American civilisation, and its institutions.

Both of these books are "popular" treatments of their subjects. Mr. Ashley, who is known to scholars as the writer of some admirable books on the Cromwellian period, went on a war-job to the United States, got fascinated by its history, and has sought to communicate his fascination by the study of some pivotal Presidents, from Washington to Woodrow Wilson, in the long line to which Mr. Truman has just given a new twist by his remarkable career. Mr. Ashley has read widely in his field; and if he has no new perspectives to contribute, he says what he has to say with grace and clarity. Sometimes, perhaps, he fails to bring out the really exciting features of the epochs he discusses, just because he has built his narrative round men, and has thus tended to leave out of account the great, impersonal forces which shaped them. Thus, I think, there is a good deal to be said for the view that General Washington was the only President whose Cabinet had a continuous reality of its own, and was not a mere annexe to the mind of the man whom the Constitution has made the sole effective source of executive decision. So, too, I think, his portrait of Andrew Jackson is much too greatly influenced by the brilliant pamphlet in which Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., sought to make President Jackson and his "kitchen cabinet" the forerunner of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. He seems to me much too generous to Theodore Roosevelt, whose energy was fantastic, but whose actual achievement was small. He does not stress enough the resemblance in social outlook between the first Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson; with all the differences in character and temperament between the two men, both of them were really conservatives whose approach to their age was determined by a common dislike of the flashy business magnate who openly used his wealth to get political power and openly boasted of it. Both, too, meant by reform a small body of measures likely to remove the outrageous effects of a civilisation dominated by the business man; both of them, too, shrank from any serious examination of the problems of their time. The main differences between them were, first, that Wilson was an introvert who tired easily, and thought the most honest of his critics an enemy, if he persevered in his criticism, and secondly, that he never got beyond the ideas he formed as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University. Theodore Roosevelt, on the other hand, was an extrovert who was never tired, who loved crowds and noise and drama, and improvised convictions which he identified with eternal truth, almost as swiftly as he thought out flashing phrases. And just as Wilson never had a new idea after he left Baltimore, so Theodore Roosevelt never had a matured belief in that exciting drama he acted, in which he was everything from Alexander and Abraham Lincoln, to Andrew Jackson and Daniel Boone, while always remaining a Peter Pan who hid his youthful fears behind the facade of immense and uproarious activity. Mr. Ashley tells us something about the "strenuous life"; but he does not dig deep enough into the persons for which it was lived.

Mr. Max Beloff has made a gallant attempt at the impossible. In the brief space at his disposal, he could not really hope to give more than a superficial account of a man as great and as complex as Jefferson. He has no sooner touched upon one theme than his allotted space compels him to dart across to another. It would have been better if Mr. Beloff had realised that he could not do what his editor unwisely required of him, and had sought to give us a few pages on the many-sidedness of Jefferson, while devoting the rest of his time to a fairly full account of one of those aspects in and through which we can catch a glimpse of the whole man. As it is, one feels, as one reads his pages, like being rushed through an immensely rich museum by a guide who is fearful that we may not arrive again at the entrance before closing time. Mr. Beloff knows far too much of his subject, and has far too much ability, to waste his time on pemmicanised history. He undertook a subject that required spaciousness and perspective. The orders given to him permitted him no chance of achieving either.

HAROLD J. LASKI

DESCRIPTIONS

South. By WILLIAM SANSOM. *Hodder & Stoughton*. 9*s*. 6*d*.

Time Was Away. By ALAN ROSS AND JOHN MINTON. *John Lehmann*. 21*s*.

After the false travel of war with its anonymous knocking about the earth, it is exciting to see again the first, eccentric shoots of a genuine literature of travel. What is it going to be? Political? Socially conscious? Revolutionary? Documentary? None of these. Since the 30's, during the wars, too many cawing reporters have flopped out of aeroplanes to pick at the feet of too many public relations officers and press attachés and told us "what the people are thinking"; the downfall of Dr. Gallup, we may guess, marks the end of all that. The interest of travel—if we may judge from two young writers of the war generation—is becoming literary once more. The cities and plains wait not for congresses but, quite simply in every generation for description. They want to be loved for themselves alone.

Mr. William Sansom is a devious familiar of the new descriptive inquisition. Trained by the war to observe and write down the intricacy of fire and especially gifted by an imaginative feeling which has grown first out of an abstract and then from technical or scientific approach to experience, he has now gone to the well-trodden places of the Mediterranean for new material. Mr. Sansom is not always the most readable of the admired writers, for his prose is often leadened by too thick a layer of images and conceits; but they indicate vitality and, for all his borrowings, a real originality of mind. His travels took him to Corsica, the south of France, Italy, the Adriatic and, I suppose, the fringe of the Greek islands, and his response is put down in a collection of long, studied episodes seen, as it might be, in the graven intensity of a microscope or through a

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nervous raking of binoculars. The eye is not enough for this poet: he works by the lens. At Ajaccio we watch a ship's engineer shoot robins and try to sell them in the cafés: that is a slow examination of the "buy-sell" frenzy of the Mediterranean. In Monte Carlo we watch in detail the behaviour of a young man dogged by the currency touts; in the Greek islands we study a diver under the sea and, in his bizarre encounter with an octupus, we are shown something else: his religious imagination; in Siena, we see the town and some flag-waving ceremony, through the eyes of three wandering dogs, or we try to see it as they might. There are a good many more anecdotes like these and they could have been picked up, cut down, shaped and polished by any travelling story writer: Mr. Sansom's method is to see them so minutely, so strangely, that the effect is to embed them further in their scene. He is the tourist who throws his discoveries back into the soil and digs them in once again.

More than a story writer, Mr. Sansom is a pedant of descriptions, making a new catalogue of the world's things, and a fresh search among its habits. Why does the hunting engineer wait for the robin to turn its back on the bush, before he fires? Why is the young man drinking beer at the bar, suddenly frightened of the grotesque metal urn on the counter? Mr. Sansom attempts to live only by the eye, for that will guide him to the extraordinary fever of anxiety which, for him, is the basis of the wilful, mischievous, restless-fingered life of human beings. We have become beings consumed by technical ability: a private kiss, a public salute to the new mayor are ingenious manœuvres. Our consciousness might be described as the inherited gift of focusing a glass; and animal mood will decide whether the image is blurred, or literal, whether passion or the absurd, will make it alarmingly too large! One can see this openly put by Mr. Sansom in a passage describing the dogs of Siena. The dogs pause in their wandering round the city:

> Had they seen and stopped stupefied at the sight of seventy or eighty marble posts that ringed the course of the Campo? Had such sudden generosity in this reserved city overwhelmed them? Had Enrico glanced up for a moment at the blue sky and seen rising, rocketing up against it, the tremendously high campanile? This delicate square tower of dark-red brick, so slender in proportion to its needling height and the vertiginous pale castellations bulging heavily at its far summit—this most beautiful erection of man that seemed ever to be moving upwards, which seemed in fact to be flying, rocketing, spearing itself in vertical flight into the wheeling heavens, this so vertical tower that gave us a glimpse that the world is round—what did it signify to Enrico's liver-coloured eye, suspicious through the hairmop? Could his wondering, almost-intelligent mind have registered its proportion, so that it appeared to him as a giant pillar, an exquisition too great for him, but of the right shape and thus innately satisfying?

Over-acted? Pompous? The groaning minuteness of the grotesque unrelieved by the licentious or the wanton? Mr. Sansom is still devoted to Kafka, to the dry and the protracted, the freakish and uncertain; some Sitwellian baroque is here and there worked in. I think the diving piece called *Poseidon's Daughter* is one of the bad turnings his talent might take: trying to avoid the freakish by becoming over portentous in his symbolism. He is in danger of being over-heated by dreams. But in dozens of passages one sees a maturing temperament emerging and I put *South* close to D. H. Lawrence's books on Italy and Sardinia; below them because Mr. Sansom's claustrophobia still seems to be literary, whereas Lawrence was beating at the walls of life.

In *Time Was Away*, Mr. Alan Ross and John Minton his romantic illustrator, go to Corsica; and this, also, is a book on a high level: poetic, personal, the pungent effect of travel on keen senses. The book suffers in tone, however, from a hatred of Merimée's island; and this tone, which owes much to the dust bin smells of post-war Europe, is in danger of becoming a convention. Compare Mr. Sansom's Ajaccio with Mr. Ross's and there is no doubt that the torpid and vacant-minded city of flies, tombs, drains and prolonged decay, impressed but failed to start in Mr. Ross the same irritation of imaginative feeling. He has one foot in the news. He was stumped by the facts: an island, worn out generations back by a series of enemy occupations, exporting its virile population every year, sunk in lassitude.

> The Corsicans rehearse death; their ballads, their laments, their poems are all embroideries of the circumstances of death and preparation for mourning. Their beauty is all in the abjectness of the regret, the abasement before and celebration of loss, a flutter of the hands in salute or forgiveness or grief. Then it is all over, the end of the responsibilities of birth. The circle has been completed.

Like Mr. Sansom, Mr. Ross over-writes also without vulgarity; given a taste for life and an individual feeling for the scene, this is not a bad way at all of writing books of travel, for it conveys strongly the sense (which highly-strung travellers have) of a fruitful conflict between themselves and the country. And after all *The Sea and Sardinia* was a good book written out of hate. As a present *Time Was Away* would be a pleasure to have; it is informative, excites envy of the travellers.

V. S. PRITCHETT

APHRA BEHN

The Incomparable Aphra. By GEORGE WOODCOCK. *Boardman.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Must one return to Aphra Behn? It seems against nature, the cloud of darkness having been so long her sole attribute. Her very name, perhaps especially her name, held one off, although it stuck in the mind. At school, encountering it over that one surviving poem—"Love in fantastic triumph sate"—I thought she was a kind of male Turk, somehow unknowable. Later on, the Restoration and bawdiness attach themselves to her image, and of course it was the bawdiness that sealed her total eclipse. Mr. George Woodcock gives a charming instance of how it worked. At the end of the eighteenth century, a Dr. Kippis wrote up her life for the *Biographia Britannica*. Kippis, we are told, "although a dissenting minister, was, for his time, an intelligent and progressive individual, a friend of Godwin and Sheridan, and a radical." Still he wrote of Aphra Behn:

> The wit of her Comedies seems to be generally acknowledged, and it is equally acknowledged that they are very indecent, on which account I have not thought myself under any obligation to peruse them. It would have been an unworthy employment, nicely to estimate a wit which, having been applied to the purposes of impiety and vice . . . ought to be consigned, if possible, to eternal oblivion.

And consigned she all but was.

Mr. Woodcock, who can see no fun in any slur on his heroine, calls this delightful frankness "pontificating in an offensive way." Well, times have changed, and Mrs. Behn has lost her moral handicap. But it seems no easier to fish her up out of Lethe. Much of her life, for one thing, is a tedious puzzle, a conglomeration of hypotheses and pseudo-romance. Her father may have been a barber, or, as she herself claimed, Lieutenant-General of six-and-thirty islands, and Surinam. The barber, if he was a barber, probably was called Amis; the Lieutenant-General appears as Johnson, and he may have adopted her. As for the mother cropping up at a later period, I failed to make out what became of her, or which had left her a widow. But one would suppose the

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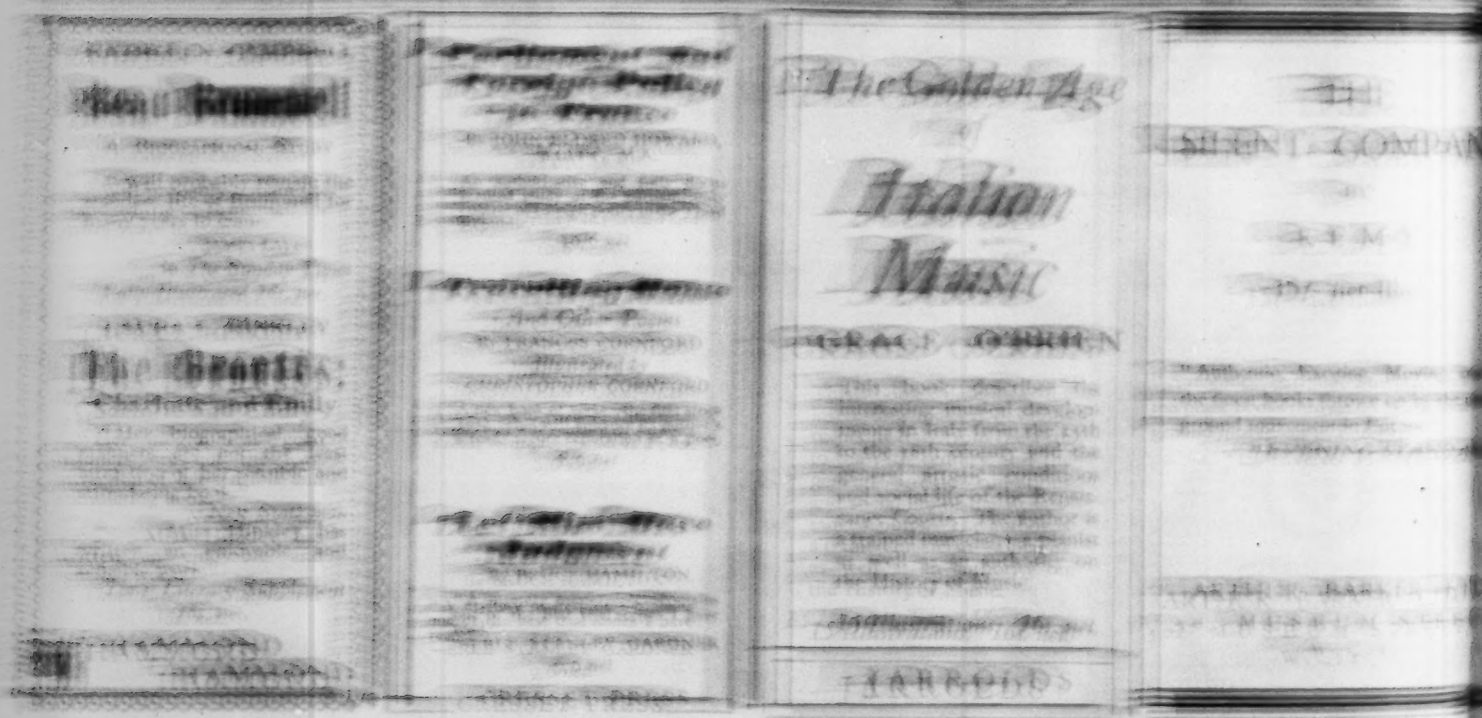
The Golden Age
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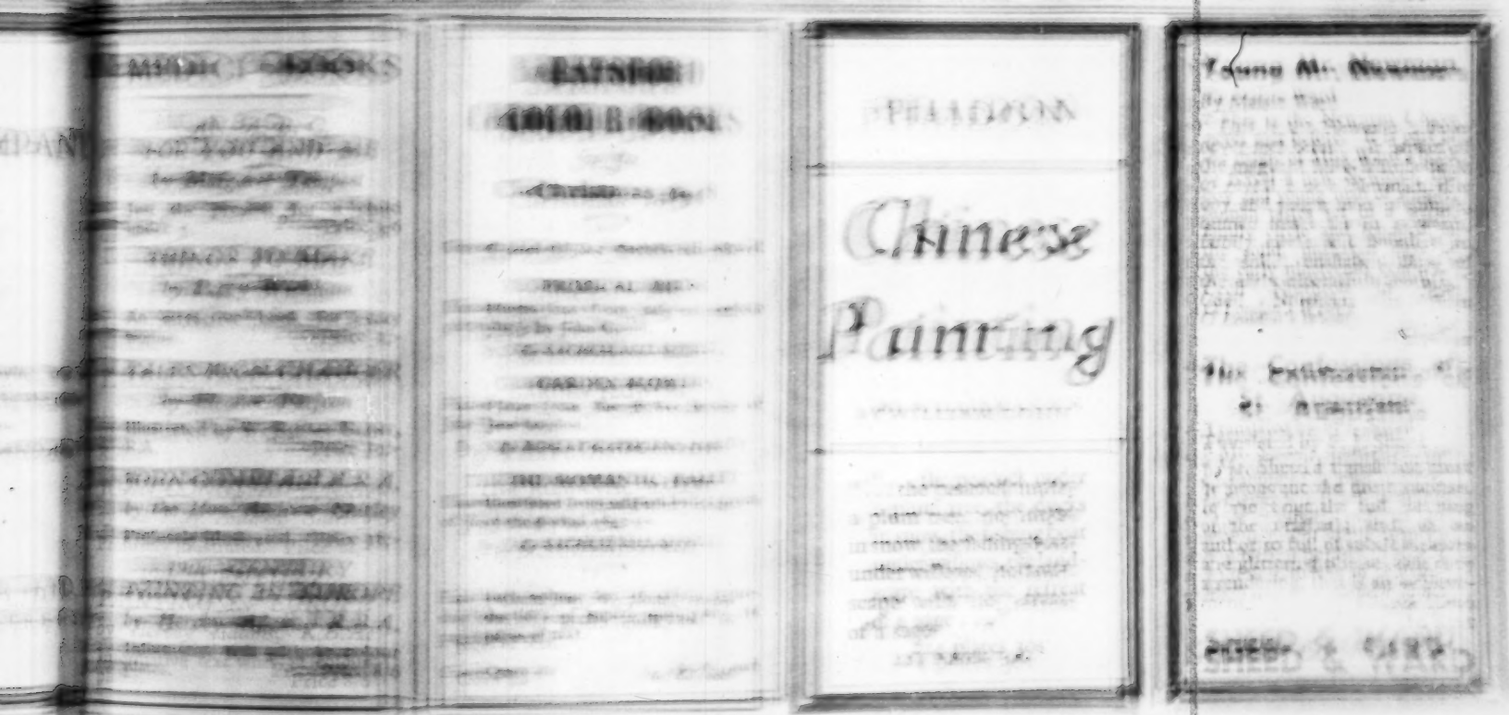

Chinese
Painting

Lieutenant-General; it looks as if the barber had been sunk once for all. Some have maintained that Aphra's yarns about Surinam—of which she wrote from highly-coloured "experience"—are fiction out and out, and that she never was there. Some, even, have denied existence to her Dutch husband—and if he did exist, that is all we know of him. That she went to Antwerp as a spy is established fact, but once again the facts were not good enough; she had to have unearthed vital secrets, and been involved in stagey erotic farce. Really, her sordid job was that of bribing a refugee, and getting him to spy on his fellow-exiles. It ate up all she had; the English government forgot all about her, and, in spite of frantic pleas, abandoned her to a debtor's gaol. And then she somehow got out, and somehow started her career of "Pleasure and Poetry."

And of the "lovely witty Astrea," whom everybody knew, we ought to know a great deal. She was the first Englishwoman to write for bread. She was unlucky and undaunted, fierce and unrancorous. She was at one time wretchedly in love with John Hoyle—"A wit uncommon and facetious, a great admirer of Lucretius"; as Whitelocke said after his death in a brawl—"an atheist, a sodomite professed, a corrupter of youth, and a blasphemer of Christ." Hoyle treated her with great cruelty, yet she remained his friend; there was something very likeable and large-minded about Astrea. She was also coarse, impudent and disingenous, but she had to live. And the Restoration theatre was no place for scruple.

Beyond that, after all, we do not know very much, for panegyric and lampoon are not evidence, and biographical romancing only gets in the way. Aphra herself is most to blame. She worked on the Baconian principle, that the mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure; but now her cloak-and-dagger, cardboard, dramatic lies are just dull. Her plays, which used to shock, are now barely readable; only seldom, and by chance, do they touch real life. The stories, though a little better, are mostly cardboard; even the much-praised *Oroonoko* is a bore on the whole. No, in spite of Mr. Woodcock, she will never come back. He does his very best, gives all the facts, and quotes freely. He overstates her merits,

> as the pioneer of women's emancipation, the anticipator of abolitionism, the advocate of free marriage, the precursor of Rousseau, and the inventress of much that has become permanent in the English novel . . . as well as the authoress of some of the best songs and plays in the English tongue.

He defends her morals, confounds her enemies, and extols the age she lived in—which was really too brutal for her, and which did her a lot of harm. All this disposes one to contradiction. But it cannot turn one against Astrea, the aggressive, generous, lonely sufferer, whose "career of pleasure" was uphill all the way. She is a casualty of letters; she had great talent, but in a vicious style it ran to waste—as Dr. Kippis said. And now the waters have closed on it.

K. JOHN

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

BACH: *St. Matthew Passion* (Suddaby/Ferrier/Greene / Boyce/Clinton/Cummings / Parsons / Bach Choir/Jacques Orch., AK2001-7, 2008-14, 2015-21).

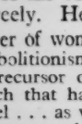
This set, a selection from which appeared last January, has one great advantage over the German (issued by HMV): it is very nearly complete. A few short recitatives, and one chorale, have been cut; but the only signal omission is the aria for bass with viola da gamba, "Come, healing Cross." The choral sections are splendidly sung, and the acoustic gives them space and resonance without confusing the parts. This, again, is an improvement on the German recording, in which the chorus is very dim. With one exception the English soloists sing with admirable style and expression, though all are placed too near the mike (how tired I get of saying this!) and are apt to distort in consequence. Miss Suddaby fares worst in this respect, but on occasion even Miss Ferrier's voice, which should be much easier to record, has a disagreeable edge. The exception mentioned above is Mr. Cummings, who, though a good artist, seems miscast: his performance does not compare at all favourably with that of Karl Erb. The orchestra plays beautifully and the balance is excellent, with plenty of bass response. The chorus, "Have lightnings and thunders" (No. 33), is rather messy, and there is a stupid turn-over which spoils the dramatic effect of the pause after "forgotten." The German set has certain obvious advantages—the language, authenticity of atmosphere—but most English discophils will, I believe, prefer the Decca issue.

DELIUS: *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (Soloists, Royal Philharmonic Orch. and Chorus/Beecham. 12 DB records).

One long, interrupted love-duet, this most unstageworthy opera must never be allowed to fall into oblivion, for it contains some of Delius's most delectable music—not only the famous "Walk to the Paradise Garden", but other, less extricable passages (scene 3, for instance). The atmosphere of Keller's story is ideally matched by the music: sounds alone are enough to evoke the tragic idyll of these simple folk. Even the vision is less tame when imagined, than it could ever be when presented. The Delius Fellowship, then, deserves our gratitude for their act of faith in sponsoring a complete set of this deeply "un-commercial" opera. The Sali of René Soames, and the Dark Fiddler of Gordon Clinton, stand out from a cast which is never more than adequate and at times positively feeble. It would be unfair to criticise in detail the Vreli of Miss Lorely Dyer, since hardly any of her notes reach us undistorted; and the rest of the vocal parts are almost equally ill-balanced. In fact, I must honestly opine that the recording of this set is a disgrace to all concerned. A studio as damp and muffled as a November day: the sounds all come to us as out of a flat wall. No space, no recession (effects of distance are in fact attempted, but not well realised), string tone horribly cramped. The orchestral playing is, of course, lovely—when the voices don't drown it, as they constantly do. Greatly as I should wish to do so, I cannot recommend this set except to those (and they have all my sympathy) who cannot bear to be without the music.

SYMPHONIES. Beethoven: *Third* (Vienna Phil./Furtwängler. DB6741-6 and DBS6747); Mendelssohn: "Italian" (Turin Sym. Orch./Rossi. AK1974-7); Tchaikovsky: *Sixth* ("Pathétique") (Paris Conservatoire/Münch. AK1968-73).

Furtwängler gives a romantically personal reading of the *Eroica*. His conduct of the first movement could not, by the wildest stretch of imagination, be called "con brio." There is an unwarranted rallentando up to the E minor episode, which then sags; and a sudden bustle, equally unwarranted, up to the tutti on p. 34 (Eulenburg miniature score). At the slightest sign of a crescendo, the beat quickens. In the *maggiore* section of the Funeral March the oboe and bassoon play their semi-quaver groups as if they were dotted, to keep time with the string triplets—an odd piece of frivolity. Some of the string entries in the same movement are ragged. And why a comma before the final chord? The Scherzo—especially the Trio—is remarkably sleepy. There are some extraneous studio noises. Despite a fine recording and some really beautiful violin tone, I recommend readers to stick to the Weingartner set. After one or two *gaffes*, in recent years, the "Italian" Symphony at least comes to us in a recording which I hail as an unqualified success. The acoustic is splendid, with the result that the heavenly score is properly stereophonic. Both wind and strings are free from distortion and sound as fresh as an autumn morning in the South. On side 8 is an arrangement of an Andante from Vivaldi's opera, *L'Olympiade*—a singularly beautiful movement. This set would make an excel-



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James Barrie

sent Christmas present for almost everyone. What has happened to M. Münch's Paris recordings? Why have they recently become so dry and shrill? I suspect foul play in the engineering department, in favour of "studio tone". This is the devil, and discophils should protest by every means in their power. Not that a better recording would reconcile me to this version of the *Pathétique*, which does not suggest that M. Münch is the right man for this work. The conducting abounds in eccentricities—especially in the second movement, which is far from graceful to begin with and falls to bits later on. Since the Malko set is wildly distortionate, I continue to recommend Furtwängler's.

CONCERTOS. Schumann: Piano Concerto (Dinu Lipatti/Philharmonia/Karajan. LX1110-3); Bruch: Violin Concerto G minor (Ida Haendel/Philharmonia/Kubelik. C3082-4).

The too powerful dynamics of the Finale suggest to me that the whole of this version of the Schumann Piano Concerto is recorded at rather too high a level; in the first two movements I do not think we are aware of this. Dinu Lipatti's performance has the grace and agility of a great dancer, and he makes the most of the lyrical spontaneities in the first movement. The orchestral playing is crisp and efficient, if rather uninterested; and the balance is excellent. All things considered, this set seems to me the best available. If you already possess Georg Kulenkampff's version (Decca) of the Bruch Concerto, do not on any account exchange it for the new set. I have not a word to say against Miss Haendel's technique, which is all but faultless, or her tone, which is magnificent. But Kulenkampff's rendering has a nobility—a tenderness and discretion—which Miss Haendel does not appear to command. Besides, the new recording is most uncomfortable: the solo violin tone achieves nearness at the expense of beauty, and the tutti sound like a circular saw.

MISCELLANEOUS ORCHESTRAL. Wolf-Ferrari: *Overture*—"Il Segreto di Susanna", and *Intermezzo*—"I Quattro Rusteghi" (Augusteo/De Sabata. DB6786); Johann Strauss: *The Blue Danube* Waltz (Vienna Phil./Karajan. LX1118); Offenbach: *Overture*—"Orpheus in the Underworld" (Berlin State Orch./Ludwig. C3801); Delibes: "Sylvia" Ballet Music (Hallé/Barbirolli. C3797-8); Rossini: *Overture*—"La Cambiale di Matrimonio" (Augusteo/Bellezza. DX1522).

De Sabata contrives to give a more artful performance of the ravishing *Intermezzo* from "I Quattro Rusteghi" than Wolf-Ferrari's own (Decca), and that, Heavens knows, was difficult to surpass. The latest version is a thought slower and less lighthearted; at the same time it is more tense, more seductive in tone and rhythm. The recording of the Overture to "Il Segreto" is even more clearly a gain. For exactly the same reasons I prefer the latest *Blue Danube* to the fairly recent, and very competent, Decca record (NSO/Krips). Constant Lambert's performance of the "Orpheus in the Underworld" overture (HMV) is in better style than the present one, which, though well recorded, is rather German in feeling. The *Sylvia* suite appears to me the best record the Hallé has made for some time: a brilliantly happy affair. So is *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*, which is musically not inferior to many of Rossini's better known overtures. The recording, however, is rather shallow and edgy.

CHAMBER MUSIC AND PIANO SOLO. Mozart: *String Quartet C major* (K465) (Philharmonia Qtet. DX1524-6); Chopin: *Sonata in B flat major* (Malcuzynski. LX1119-21); Albeniz: *Evocación*, and Falla: *Danza No. 2*—"La Vida Breve" (Gonzalo Soriano. C3799); Rachmaninoff: *Lilacs*, and Khachaturyan: *Sabre Dance*—"Gayaneh" (Moiseiwitsch. B9688).

The Philharmonia issue is a great disappointment. Boxily recorded, the tone is dry and dismal, while the performance—much slower than is at all usual—lacks authority and attack. The Finale comes off best; the rest of the work is more or less inert. Malcuzynski's rendering of Chopin's B flat minor Sonata can, I think not unfairly, be summed up in one word: meretricious. Why *hack* at the opening phrase of the allegro? Why pounce on the D flat major subject, as if to polish it off? At the *reprise* of the Funeral March, why play the first bass chord in each bar an octave lower than it is written? Why deliver the Finale mezzo-forte, with excursions into fortissimo, when Chopin has marked the whole movement *sotto voce*? Surely this extraordinary movement ought to suggest the gusty sadness of Limbo, that no-man's land between Hell and Purgatory? It should be gone almost before we realise that it is there—a mere pattern of mist, a network of rooks at sunset. Apart from faults of judgment, the recording of this issue is not nearly good enough to distract attention from the very old but classic Rachmaninoff set, which is still in the catalogue. Long may it remain so! It must be added that the turn-over from side 1 to 2 is so devised as to involve a quite unnecessary repetition of the B flat major chord. I turn with relief to Gonzalo Soriano's record, which is a distinct success. His unsentimental playing is rich in sudden and very interesting rhythmic nuances, and his vivid touch is abetted by the recording. *Evocación*, by the way, although less showy than some of the later instalments of "Iberia," is an uncommonly haunting piece. Some people will frown upon Rachmaninoff's transcription of his lovely song, *Lilacs*. I cannot follow them: in this decorative elaboration the composer seems to me to have made something different, but not inferior; and Moiseiwitsch plays it magically. The other side of this disc might just as well have been blank, for all the music it contains.

VOCAL. Brahms: *Liebeslieder Walzer*, op. 52 (Seefried / Höngen / Meyerwelfing / Hotter / acc. Wührer and Von Nordberg. LX1114-7); Mozart: "Non piu andrai" (*Figaro*), and "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen" (*Zauberflöte*) (Erich Kunz/Vienna Phil./Morale. LX1123); Wagner: "Rome Narrative" (*Tannhäuser*) (Svanholm/Orch./Weissmann. DB6787); Handel: "Ombra mai fu" (*Xerxes*), and Bizet: *Agnus Dei* (Flagstad/Philharmonia/Braithwaite. DB6791); Rimsky-Korsakoff: "Hymn to the Sun" (*Coq d'Or*), and Offenbach: "Les Oiseaux dans la charmille" (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) (Lily Pons/Columbia Concert Orch./Kostelanetz. LX1122); Rossini: "Una voce poco fa" (*Il Barbiere*) (Margherita Carosio/Cov. Garden/Patané. DB6379); Mozart: *Warnung*, and Arne: "Where the bee sucks" and "Where daisies pied" (Schwarzkopf/Moore. LB73); Verdi: "O Carlo, ascolta" (*Don Carlo, act* 4) and Giordano: "Nemico della patria" (*Andrea Chenier, act* 1) (Silveri/Cov. Garden/Rankl. DX1521).

The *Liebeslieder* set contains some very beautiful moments, but it is not a clear gain over the old Boulanger set (never alas! issued in this country). Perhaps it is too much to expect of four opera stars that they should sing unselfishly; at all events the balance of parts in these waltzes is sometimes quite wrong, though the sound is invariably sumptuous. In spite of faults this set should not be missed: the music is a constant delight and the recording a treat. Erich Kunz's "Non piu andrai" is now by far the best available. This is altogether a superb record. The *Rome Narrative* was evidently not a good choice for Set Svanholm: his singing here is heavy, effortful, inexpressive. I should say the name of Mme Flagstad's latest record—and is it not time the

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horrible *Agnus Dei*, for which Bizet himself can hardly be held responsible, was dropped for ever? Mme Pons sings the "Hymn to the Sun" in her staccato, heavily aspirated style, which ruins the music. Olympia's aria fares better, but not really well. Signora Carosio's rendering of "Una voce" is more spirited than Jennie Tourel's, but otherwise not so good: the whole of the vocal part is over-recorded, and the high notes are most displeasing. Miss Schwarzkopf's latest contribution is very winning: her English is clear, her tone light and charming, and the balance is good. There is some slight distortion in the louder portions of Signor Silveri's disc; otherwise this is his best record to date, for it shows for the first time how nobly he can sing. The death of Posa is a particularly fine example of Verdian pathos.

Space-saving key: DB, DA, C=HMV.
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RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 978

Set by Naomi Lewis

Prizes are offered for a letter by Lord Chesterfield to a young descendant living to-day, advising him on the methods and prospects of one of the following: entering the Church, or the police force or the B.B.C.; or of becoming a literary or a dramatic critic. Limit 150 words.

Report by Naomi Lewis

Il faut du brillant, et même un peu de fracas, mais point de médiocre. Lord Chesterfield might well be advising competitors. For he was essentially a practical man; if he had not much success with his son, that was clearly because he was his father. Two centuries of retirement would not have made him any the less detailed, informed and urbanely remorseless a mentor. Parts you may not have; but *douceur* of gesture, *train-train du monde*, a light *entregent*, and a letter to a Minister in office—these should ensure you a post; in what profession, though? Many competitors favoured the Church, feeling, no doubt, that to be but a voice or a pen were a waste of deportment. Guy Kendall's Earl does consider sending the young man to "one of our Plantations." Fergie deplores his wish to write for this "Jacobin newspaper." R.D.C., arranging for his protege to meet the right contacts for entering the B.B.C., quotes: "Your lustre, not your solidity, must take them." And then: "The several parts, which will compose the Announcer you should now have become, are elegant, easy, natural, superior good breeding; an engaging address; genteel motions; an insinuating softness in your looks, words and actions; a spruce, lively air; fashionable dress." A nice passage, but is it all *a propos?* Now the prizes. The first of 2½ guineas goes unhesitatingly to L. E. J.; J. C. B. Date, L. G. Udall and R. J. P. Hewison have a guinea each; and Phyllis Terry half a guinea. Honourable mentions to E. M. W., Allan M. Laing, Terence Melican, D. H., Guy Kendall.

I am sorry you choose the Church, but since you are decided for it, I commend to you the Church of Rome. For a young man of family the act of conversion is, I am assured, made easy; and the demands upon your faith will not be such as it may not stretch to. Rome rides our English Catholics with light hands; their women are both *dévotes* and *mondaines*; and you will find among them writers who, for a pinch of Faith, take leave to exercise their wit and sensibility (you may add sensuality) perfectly at large. You will dally at Oxford, and be comforted in manors where sport and good breeding, tho' declining, still combine; and, since the conversion of a *Stanhope* may not pass unobserved at the See of St. Peter, I shall count it very much your fault if at 35 you be not a *Monseigneur*.

L. E. J.

I would not have you choose the service of the Law only out of the desire for Notoriety; you will soon weary of it when once your friends have ceased to admire your choice. Neither is it a way to power in affairs, for Authority, even in the most despotic Nation, lies not with the Police but their masters; they are but the Instruments of Tyranny, who earn the reproach of the oppressed without enjoying the sweets of Power. To succeed in your Business you must use but little show of authority and much of Good Humour. Be familiar with all, but the boon companion of none. Study to be content with your own company, for you will have much of it.

J. C. B. DATE

So rightly are the proprieties observed in these times, *quod semper non erat*, that to enrol in this Body, which you purpose to do, I can but advise you to proceed to the nearest Police Post and offer your services to the gentleman in charge.

For your future remember that your company will be, of necessity, apart from your fellows, mostly o the vulgar and disreputable sort. Your own behavio towards such must be *suaviter in modo, fortiter in r* Dissuade, if you can, the prospective vandal, drunka or thief, but, this failing, deal with them firmly shall be taught you by your Captains.

So shall you protect His Majestie's decent subject While justly dealing with those whom you mu thwart it is, I believe, the case that he who successfull brings the larger number of impenitents before th Authorities, through this very virtuous zeal, attain high rank. The uniform is becoming and the ne cravat engenders no small dignity.

L. G. UDALL

In my day the Stage was hardly allowed gentleman but *autres tems, autres mœurs;* and success sweeten much that else had stank. Expect no great Emolu ments: make this trade the *Tuscan* whereon you re the *Corinthian* Edifice of more remunerative occup tions.

Gain foothold by Recommendations, presenting a uniformly serviceable air, studying to please; an advance yourself by speaking fair of Critick to Act and *vice versa*. You may soon thus acquire the co siderable parts of the business; the minute an mechanical leave to stagehands.

I suppose you fairly launched; at all opening nigh (paying if need be); conversing familiarly to, or o the principal Performers. You must now resol whether to proceed by Complaisance or Terro Attempting a whiffling Discrimination, you shall onl be catched in Confusion. If by Terror, you wi commend one Critick to another, and praise ea Player to his, or her, rival. Adieu.

R. J. P. HEWISON

The task of advising you on a career is no burde but a pleasure, and the little difficulty of getting th letter franked and delivered has been satisfactori overcome.

Your AMBITION, for that is what you call yourself, to become a literary critic, makes me uneas How do such people live? I beg you to make enquiri before setting your heart much upon it, for you m find it is a thing everyone does for a time, but nobo for long. There may be no substance in it, and would not have any descendant of mine become charge upon his relatives.

If you decide to continue with this project, re only the first few pages and the last, of any boo you are given to criticise, unless your fancy is mighti caught; for an author ponders most his opening, a closes the book with his reflexions. The meat is the and the rest you need not know, and may be bett without it. Adieu.

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Appointments Vacant

None of the vacancies in these columns relates to a man between 18 and 50 inclusive or a woman between 18 and 40 inclusive unless he or she is excepted from the provision of the Control of Engagement Order, 1947, or the vacancy is for employment excepted from the provision of that Order.

JOINT Matriculation Board (Universities of Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Birmingham). The Board proposes to appoint a second Assistant Secretary at a commencing salary of not less than £700 p.a. (with membership of the F.S.S.U. and children's allowances). Person appointed will be reqd. to perform such admin. and general duties in the Board's office as may be allocated to him in connection with (a) university entrance requirements, (b) examinations. Applicants should be univ. graduates. Applics., envelopes marked "Assistant Secretary," should be submitted to Secy., Joint Matriculation Board, 315 Oxford Rd. Manchester, 13, by Dec. 15. No form of applic. is provided and testimonials or copies of testimonials are not to be sent; names and addresses of three persons to whom ref. may be made must be included in the applic. reg. with details of applicant's age, qualifics., and previous exp. Successful candidate reqd. to take up appointment by March 1, 1949.

SENIOR Psychologist reqd. by National Assocn. for Mental Health to undertake lecturing on educational and psychological topics, direction of training courses and some clinical work. Qualifics. reqd.—training and exp. in child guidance work; exp. in educational methods and in lecturing. Sal. from £720 p.a., according to qualifics. and exp. Applic. with full details & names of 2 refs. to Educ. Dept., 39 Queen Anne St. W.1, within ten days.

UNIV. of London, Tutorial Classes Ctee. Applics. invited for Staff Tutorships in Philosophy, Psychology, Economics, and Political Science, from men and women of high academic standing, and with exp. in conducting Tutorial Classes. Salary £600–£25–£850 (also Family Allowances). Partics. and applic. forms from Director of the Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies, Senate House, W.C.1. Completed forms should be submitted by Dec. 15.

LONDON School of Economics and Political Science, Univ. of London. Applics. invited for (1) a Lectureship in Colonial Administration. Candidates having a first-hand knowledge of some Colonial territory will be preferred; (2) Lectureship in Anthropology. Salary scale £500, rising to £850 p.a., with superann. benefits and family allowances. Starting sal. in accordance with qualifics. and exp. Successful candidates will be reqd. to take up their duties on Jan. 1, or as soon thereafter as possible. Applics., with names and addresses of 3 referees, should be forwarded by Dec. 10, to Secy., London School of Economics, Houghton St. Aldwych, W.C.2, from whom further partics. may be obtained.

UNIVERSITY of Sydney. Lectureship in Greek. Applics. invited for position of Lecturer in Greek in the Faculty of Arts. Salary range is £500 (Australian) p.a., rising by annual increments of £50 to £750 (Australian) p.a., and is subject to deductions under State Superannuation Act. Commencing sal. will be fixed according to qualifics. and exp. Applicants should have an Hons. degree in Greek or Classics. Some preference will be given to candidates with special qualifics. or interest in Greek Literature, though this is not essential. Successful applicant will be reqd. to take up duties as soon after March 1, 1949, as possible. Further information and details as to method of application may be obtained from Sec., Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth, 32 Woburn Sq. W.C.1. Closing date for receipt of applics. is Dec. 15, 1948.

UNIV. of Birmingham Extra-Mural Dept. Applics. invited for follg. posts: (1) Staff Tutor in Natural Science, (2) Resident Tutor in South Staffordshire (Dudley and district). Salaries (£500–£700) with superann. under F.S.S.U. Initial salary according to qualifics. and exp. Further partics. from Director of Extra-Mural Studies, The University, Edmund St. Birmingham, 3, to whom applic. should be sent by Dec. 11, 1948.

THE Civil Service Commissioners invite applics. from suitably qualified men and women for appointment as Economic Assistants in Economic Section of the Cabinet Secretariat on incl. scale of £400–£750 (men) or £400–£650 (women). Age limits 20½–24 on Jan. 1, 1949, with extension for regular service in H.M. Forces, and, up to two years for voluntary service in H.M. Forces otherwise than on a regular engagement or for compulsory natl. service under National Service Acts. Candidates must have obtained a Univ. degree in economic subjects with at least Second Class Hons., except that those taking a final degree exam. up to the end of 1948 will be provisionally considered. Superann. arrangements will be under Federated Superann. System for Universities. Further partics. and forms of application from Secretary, Civil Service Commission, 6 Burlington Gardens, London, W.1, quoting No. 2325, by whom completed applics. must be received by Dec. 15, 1948.

WORCESTERSHIRE Educ. Ctee. Applics. invited for post of Asst. Advisory Officer for Youth and Adult Education. Wide knowledge of youth work and some admin. exp. is desirable. Sal. scale: £550×£25—£700 (man) or £495×£20—£560 (woman). Forms of applic. may be obtained from Director of Educ., County Educ. Office, Castle St. Worcester, to whom they should be returned by Dec. 25. (V123.)

NATIONAL Union of Students requires Secretary/Organiser for Grants and Welfare department. Under 35. Sal. acc. to ability. Apply in writing with names of two referees, N.U.S., 3 Endsleigh St. W.C.1.

Appointments Vacant—continued

UNIV. of Leeds, Dept. of Philosophy. Applics. invited for appointment of Asst. Lectureship in Philosophy, at an initial sal. of £400–£450 p.a. (accdg. to qualifics. and exp.), rising by two annual increments of £25. Applics. should reach Registrar, The University, Leeds, 2 (from whom further partics. are obtainable), by December 13.

UNIV. of Birmingham. Applics. invited for post of Assistant Librarian in charge of Medical School Library at an initial salary of £400–£500 p.a., according to qualifics. and exp., duties to commence Jan. 1, 1949. Degree and previous exp. in a medical library desirable. Applics., with two testimonials, to reach the Librarian, the University, Edmund St. Birmingham, 3, by Dec. 18.

WORKERS' Educational Assocn., East Midland Distr. Applics. invited for post of Organising Tutor in South Lindsey (Lincs). Candidates should be graduates. Experience in adult education an advantage. Sal. £450×£25×£600. The appointment will be made as soon as possible. Forms of application from J. T. Rhodes, District Sec., W.E.A., 16 Shakespeare St. Nottingham.

L.C.C. Applics. invited for post of resident or non-resident Assistant Master at Rayners Residential School for deaf and partially deaf children with additional handicap, Penn, Bucks. It is desirable that candidates should hold Deaf Diploma of the Univ. of Manchester or Natl. College of Teachers of the Deaf. Candidates not holding the Diploma must be prepared to obtain it within 3 yrs. of date of appointment. Sal.: Burnham Scale with two special school increments carried beyond the max., plus a further additional increment for holders of the Deaf Diploma. Emoluments of board, lodging and washing in consideration of supervisory and extraneous duties outside school hours and at week-ends (or £104 a year in lieu in case of non-resident staff). Applic. forms from Educ. Officer (T.S.5), The County Hall, Westminster Bridge, S.E.1 (s.a.e. necessary), returnable by December 18. (2145.)

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EFFICIENT woman practical knowledge child psychology, successful experience running school for emotionally maladjusted children, sks. job assistant child guidance clinic or similar work, London area, to add experience while studying social science and mental hygiene. Box 6378.

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Appointments Wanted—continued

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